

# BirdLife Shoalhaven Magazine

Summer 2019



White-bellied Sea-Eagle  
at Wilfords Lane Wetlands  
photo by Charles Dove

## In this issue ...

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### Conservation Curiosities - by Chris Grounds ... [page 9](#)

Chris comments on a number of "Conservation Curiosities" that have popped up in the Shoalhaven in recent months, including a Regent Honeyeater in a main street in Nowra, a Beach Stone Curlew (pictured left) and a Hooded Plover at Shoalhaven Heads, a Bar-tailed Godwit in St Georges Basin, Peacocks at Greenpatch in Booderee National, and a number of other oddities.

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### Wilfords Lane Wetlands - by Charles Dove ... [page 13](#)

Charles describes the Wilfords Lane Wetlands about 4 kilometres south of Milton, including its history, the birds that have been sighted there, and the plans to build three bird hides - which will be the first bird hides in the Shoalhaven.

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### Interview with Norm Webb ... [page 17](#)

Norm lives in St Georges Basin and is a champion for small birds. His own gardens are very bird-friendly, and he has helped build the gardens of the local scout hall and a couple of friends in his street, all of which are connected via streetscaping. In addition, as part of Basin Bushcare, Norm has made three local parks havens for small birds, as well as the Wirrecoo Garden at the Jervis Bay Maritime Museum (JBMM). Large birds are not ignored either, with Norm responsible for the "Save the Glossies" project at the JBMM.

Norm shows how one determined individual can make a huge impact for the betterment of bird conservation in their local area.

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### Eyre Bird Observatory - by Andrew and Sharon Morgan ... [page 28](#)

Gerringong residents and BirdLife Shoalhaven members Andrew and Sharon report on their recent three month stint as managers of BirdLife Australia's Eyre Bird Observatory in Western Australia - tucked in between the Nullarbor Plain to the north, and the Southern Ocean to the south.

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### Also ...

Information about the AGM ... [page 3](#)

President's Report ..... [page 4](#)

Conservation Officer Report ... [page 5](#)

Lake Wollumboola ..... [page 25](#)

World's First Birder ..... [page 27](#)

Web Watch ..... [page 32](#)

Jervis Bay KBA.. [page 36](#)

BLS Calendar ... [page 38](#)

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## Birdwatching, AGM, Dinner, Trivia Quiz

(Tuesday 19th February 2019)



This year's AGM will be held in Ulladulla on Tuesday 19th February. Prior to the AGM there will be a bird walk for those attending the AGM, followed by dinner at the Swordfish Restaurant in the Milton Ulladulla Bowling Club, the AGM and the Bird Trivia Quiz. The night should finish by 9pm. A detailed timetable is shown below.

### Birdwatching (4:30pm)

Prior to the AGM there will be a birdwatching activity from 4:30 pm until 6:00 pm. We will meet at Mick Ryan Park in Milton (at the huge fig tree) at 4:30 pm (sharp) and then travel approximately 4km to the Wilfords Lane Wetlands where South East Local Land Services is planning to build Ulladulla's first bird hides, on private property. The guide will be Charles Dove.



### Dinner (6pm)

After the birdwatching we can have dinner at the Swordfish Restaurant in the Milton Ulladulla Bowling Club from 6:00 pm until 7:00 pm. The menu can be viewed at [www.miltonulladullabowlingclub.com.au/menu.html](http://www.miltonulladullabowlingclub.com.au/menu.html)

### AGM (7pm)

This year's AGM will be held at the Milton Ulladulla Bowling Club (68 St Vincent Street, Ulladulla) at 7pm on Tuesday 19th February.

If you would like to nominate for the committee you have until 22nd January. Nominations can be submitted in any form you like (written, emailed, phoned) to the Secretary or President of BirdLife Shoalhaven.

The AGM will be held in a private meeting room upstairs at the Bowling Club. The meeting should only take about half an hour or so, and will be followed by our fun, famous and now traditional Bird Trivia Quiz.

### Bird Trivia Quiz (7:30 pm - ish)

This year all the questions are multiple choice, so the correct answers will be right there in front of you - easy! The trivia quiz should be done and dusted by 9pm which should give everyone plenty of time to get home at a reasonable hour.

As usual, there will be 50 questions in the Bird Trivia Quiz, with this year's questions divided into 5 sets of 10 related questions. The subjects of the 5 sets will be -

- famous birds
- how well do you know your local birds
- numbers and statistics
- literature and popular culture
- total trivia

Come along for the birdwatching, dinner, AGM and trivia and you will have a great night!

# President's Report

- by Rob Dunn

2018 was another active year for BirdLife Shoalhaven!

Every year sees highs and lows in our bird conservation work, but in 2018 two wins stood out.

The Lake Wollumboola Protection Association successfully fought the proposed developments of a golf course at the Lake and a major housing and commercial expansion at West Culburra. This achievement has been acknowledged by BirdLife Australia, as part of BirdLife International's KBA program. It is not every day that a small community organisation can act locally and make a global difference. In 2018 the Association did just that!

The second win was the huge community effort which forced Council to reverse its decision to make Cudmirrah Beach open to off-leash dogs. The seemingly ever-increasing rise in the number of tourists and dogs continues, but at least with this decision there was a sense of achievement for everyone involved.

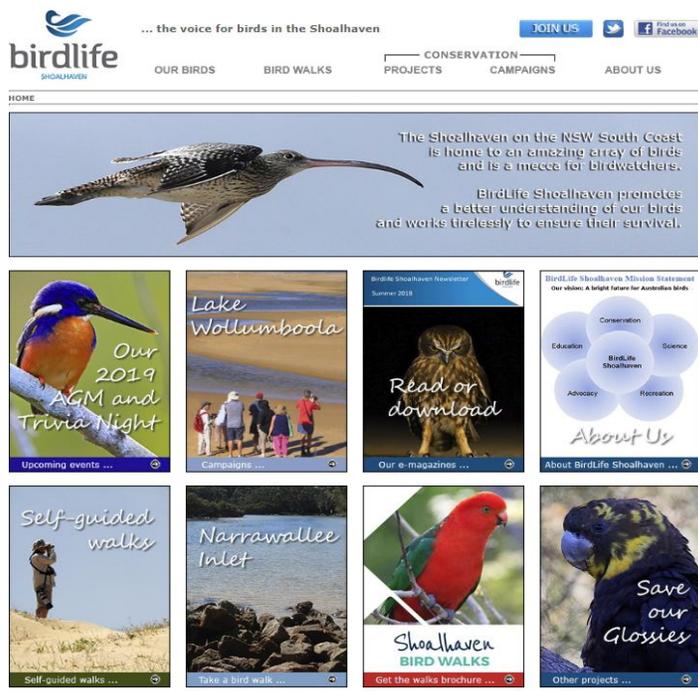


As in previous years, BLS arranged for a number of guest speakers on various bird issues, while MUD Birders, Shoalhaven Birdwatchers and BLS members maintained a full calendar of bird walks. In October the inaugural Bird Haven Festival in Shoalhaven Heads added greatly to the understanding and appreciation of our birds. The event was a huge success, drawing over 100 people, many of whom openly identified themselves as birding novices, and others who had especially travelled from out of the area. This proved that bird tourism has real potential in the Shoalhaven and that there are lots of local people who want to learn more and be involved. The organisers are already in the planning stage for this year to make it even bigger and better. So, put the weekend of 19 & 20 October 2019 in your diaries now!

At the beginning of 2018, the BLS Committee set itself the challenge of building Shoalhaven's first bird hide and promoting some of our bird walks with interpretative signage. We are still in the planning stage on a number of fronts, but several exciting opportunities have arisen.

There are three new bird hides planned to be built on two private properties at Burrill Lake, funded by South East Local Land Services; the existing bird viewing platform at Lake Wollumboola is due to be renovated and expanded by Council and, with funds raised at the Bird Haven Festival and as part of OEH's Migratory Shorebirds Save our Species grant, we hope to have signage installed at the Lake, Shoalhaven Heads and other bird walk locations. Watch this space!

Our magazines show that BLS and our network continue to make a difference for the conservation of our birds. This is underpinned by our expanding supporter base. BLS now has 600 members and supporters; a number which continues to increase each year. This is driven by community interest in our conservation work, more talks and walks, community group presentations, the Bird Haven Festival (coinciding with the Aussie Backyard Bird Count), and many of you who have forwarded the BLS Magazine to your friends or sent them to our website. On that subject, we now have a new-look website! It has all our Magazines, an increasing number of bird walks, details on our conservation projects and campaigns, a calendar of events, an emerging bird photo library, all our latest news and it looks great!



Many thanks for everyone's support for BLS and bird conservation in 2018. 2019 will inevitably bring more conservation challenges for BLS, but hopefully more wins to celebrate together, as well as opportunities to learn more about our birds with other interesting, fun people. I look forward to playing my own part in all of this and catching up with many of you in the year ahead.

## Conservation Officer Report

Summer 2018 / 2019 - by Chris Grounds

There are many doors into the conservation room but one of the most engaging is first hand encounters with threatened species and their habitats.

Participation in the NPWS Shorebird Recovery Project provides an access to some interesting bird and habitat conservation for about 100 volunteers in the Shoalhaven "Save Our Species" project.

Two species are the focus for this report:

- Pied Oystercatcher (*Haematopus longirostris*): endangered threatened species in NSW, otherwise secure.
- Hooded Plover (*Thinornis rubricollis*): critically endangered threatened species in NSW; vulnerable in Victoria and South Australia, and Federal listing.

In Booderee National Park this season, successful shorebird breeding created interest for Park staff, particularly the Natural Resources Team as well as the local Wreck Bay community who are the park owners and some of whom are NPWS volunteers.

Movement and migration of breeding pairs of Hooded Plover and Pied Oystercatchers was certainly a major and developing theme.

In 2016-17 a pair of **Pied Oystercatchers** nested near HMAS Creswell and were subsequently sighted at Greenpatch with a 3 week old chick around Christmas (see photo below). This was said to be a first for the site. The chick didn't survive but the parents stayed for some time, mixing with peak season visitor numbers.

One of the parents has a Yellow Flag "YW", which was traced to Corner Inlet in Victoria, adjacent to Wilsons Promontory.



This pair were discovered again on November 18th 2018 after an extended absence, in the corner of the Greenpatch estuary with a one week old chick but the trio disappeared from the locality soon after, almost certainly due to relentless people pressure.



Another shorebird breeding failure seemed likely until our Jervis Bay KBA Guardian, Karen Davis, came across some POCs at a visit to Hole In The Wall (two kilometres east of Greenpatch) one month later.

That information created some excitement and a quick check on December 17th revealed that the trio had survived and the chick was thriving in ideal habitat. It was now five weeks old, having migrated two kilometres along the coastline as a tiny, young chick.

The faultless verification for this sighting was of course, the Yellow YW flag on one of the parents, probably the father. The value of a flag!

That chick fledged on Boxing Day but the trio remained well settled in the Hole-In-The-Wall beach-reef-lagoon habitat until another movement back and forth between Greenpatch and Hole-In-The-Wall commenced in mid-January.



The migration theme of this story of these POCs involves Victoria but also a stretch of shoreline on Jervis Bay.

Another interesting element of the 2018 POC migration arose on Cave Beach during Hooded Plover monitoring.

In late November a POC attracted some special attention on Cave Beach because of a red "2N" flag. It arrived with an unflagged companion.



New Victorian migrant POC "Red 2N"

The colour was an alert of course and the code "2N" begged investigation.

The assistance of BirdLife Australia's Shorebird specialist, Dan Weller, identified the POC as having been flagged at Western Port in Victoria. Another Victorian migrant! This bird was subsequently seen on a regular basis at either Cave Beach or Bherwerre Beach but was not involved in breeding.

A fascinating tit-bit of information was also provided to indicate a POC with a similar red flag - "1N" - had been logged on the South Island of New Zealand. Apparently migration of Pied Oystercatchers between Australia and New Zealand is not unknown!

Consider for a moment how much of this story would be missing without the leg flags ...

### Hooded Plovers

It seemed as well that even the Cave Beach Hooded Plovers were involved in their own mini-migrations. The well-known C7 - E6 pair moved from their Cool Season abode on Bherwerre Beach back to Cave Beach and established their first nest of three eggs in early September.

Later in the month the hen, C7, left mate E6 with the three egg nest at Cave Beach and returned to Bherwerre Beach. She was to return, but the nest was lost, probably by the time she was back on Cave Beach.

Tough gig for E6 but he stuck with C7 and by mid-November there was another three egg nest.

C7 had left E6 in her earlier life for another male - M9 - and nested for a few seasons on Cave Beach without success. More of a temporary interpersonal migration!

Incidentally, M9 disappeared totally in the 2017-18 breeding season - perhaps a celestial migration?

Undaunted, the reproductive and romantic C7 took up with her old beau E6 soon after!

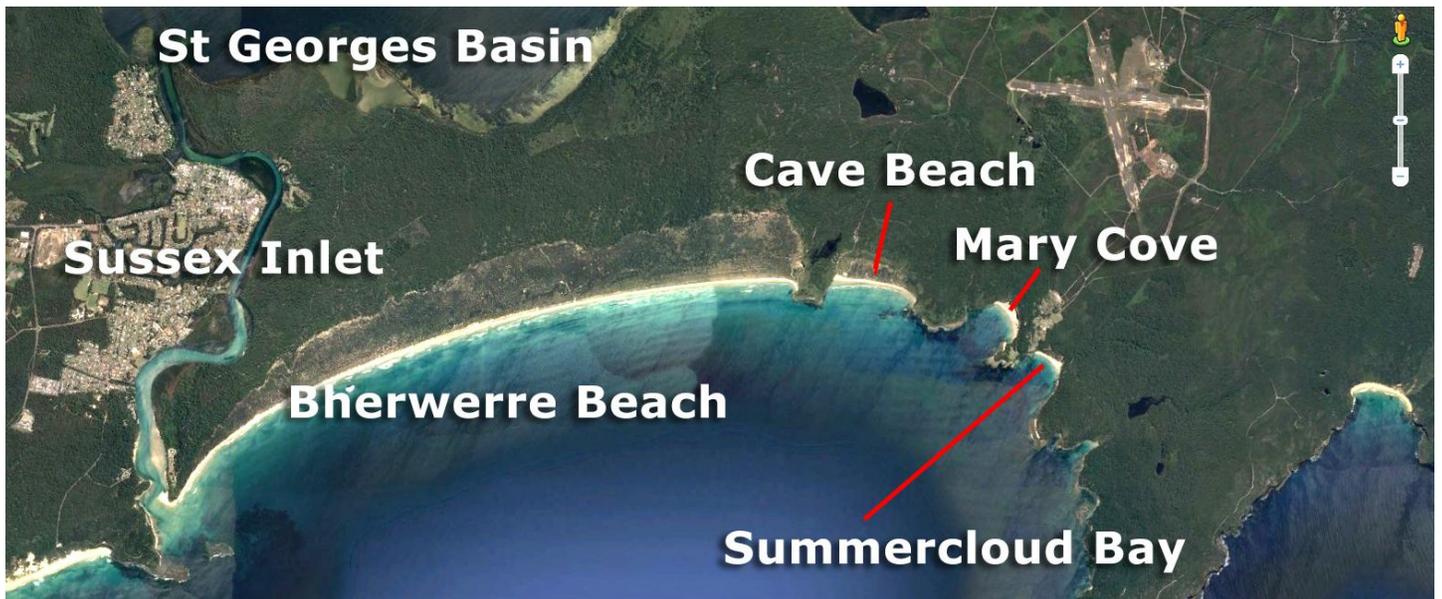


The Hoodie three chick troop lasted for two weeks

A second three egg nest in 2018 produced three chicks by November 2nd with two chicks surviving past November 19th to fledge later in December.



The two Hoodie fledglings



Then the migration theme resumed on the shoreline with the C7 - E6 breeding pair showing up at the Mary Cove Beach, immediately east of Cave Beach in the Wreck Bay Community Territory, and they have a surviving two egg nest, regularly monitored by Park Rangers and Wreck Bay community members.

The downside to all of this is of course, is that Mary Cove lagoon and beach is one of the major, identified and known PFAS contamination sites.

The mother - C7 - has nested on all three Booderee Beaches over the last five summer breeding seasons with two partners and in the current season has moved between these beaches on two occasions, leaving her partner E6 of the early day then rejoining him for a successful nesting this season prior to another site move.

She is, it seems, a little restless!

This story had a postscript in early January when Ralph Stadius from Illawarra Birders logged a trip to Shoalhaven Heads on E-Bird. His data included a sighting and photograph (see below) of a Juvenile Hooded Plover at the site.

Though unflagged, all other evidence including photo matching suggested this was almost certainly one of the two surviving juveniles from Cave Beach. This bird could not be seen in subsequent site checks but the evidence was in.

Consideration of the 35km journey north for this juvenile Hoodie from Cave Beach to the Shoalhaven Heads river entrance generates some interesting thoughts on shorebird movement and migration.

There is more to bird migration than meets the eye. It is a fabulous story - and leg flagging really helps!



Hoodie Juvenile at Shoalhaven Heads



Community Conservation of the Far Eastern Curlew

## SHOREBIRDS WALK AND TALK

With Chris Grounds, BirdLife Shoalhaven

Sunday the 20<sup>th</sup> January 2019

9:00am – 11:00am

River Road Reserve, Shoalhaven Heads



Come along and join us on a short walk to observe and learn about the Shoalhaven's fascinating migratory shorebirds that have returned from their epic journey from the Arctic Circle. Discover our beach-nesting shorebirds and how to protect them.

Bookings essential: Email [lduff@cva.org.au](mailto:lduff@cva.org.au) or text M: 0432688775

Wear sturdy shoes and sun-smart clothes. Bring water and binoculars if you have them.



This project is supported through the Australian Government's National Landcare Program Threatened Species Recovery Fund – Open Round.



## Conservation Curiosities

- by Chris Grounds

As we birders know, one-off encounters occur, which are of special interest. This is the first article of many (we hope) that record some of these in our area. It is also hoped that our members and supporters will contribute with a short story and ideally a photo - any photo - for future editions. Come on BLS members - "show and tell" the amazing birdlife of the Shoalhaven. Just email me at [solum306@gmail.com](mailto:solum306@gmail.com)

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### Bherwerre Wetland Art Installation at Sanctuary Point



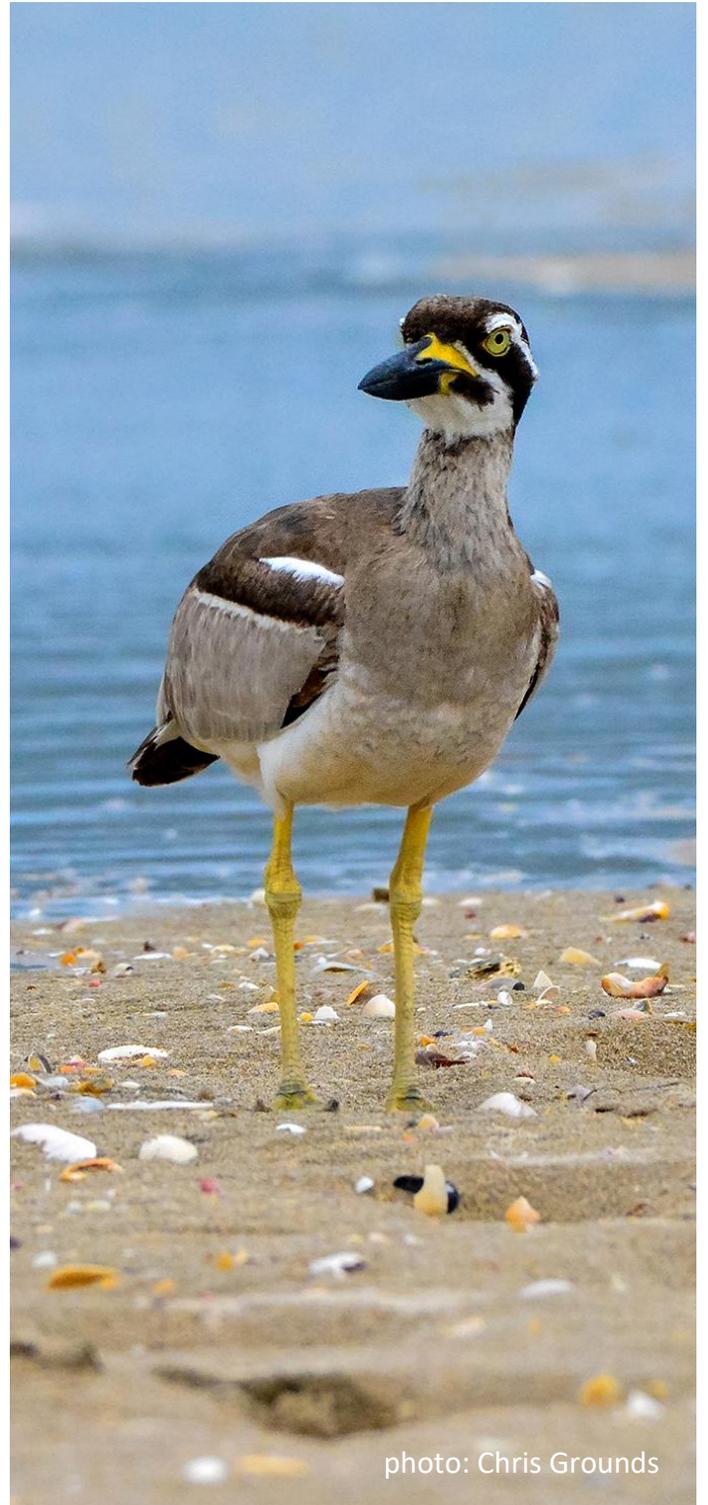
The conservation of the Bherwerre Wetland at Sanctuary Point has been progressing for four years now. Council has approved a Concept Plan for their own land, which has St Georges Basin frontage. The wetland has an amazing array of ecology from Wet Sclerophyll Forest to Saltmarsh, and Mangrove and Sea Grass meadows. The recent opening of the Art Installation facing Larmer Avenue was the result of a lot of community input. Birds of the site feature in the installation panels, which will be rotated to display different panels of the nine erected.



### Beach Stone Curlew at Shoalhaven Heads

(*Esacus magnirostris*)

One of the three known Critically Endangered species of the Jervis CMA region, this enigmatic species is seen occasionally in the Shoalhaven, especially in the broader Crookhaven-Orient Point area. This individual at Shoalhaven Heads has been a recent focus of special birder interest. The NSW Government Environment and Heritage site notes that a 2000 survey recorded a minimum of just 13 individuals for NSW.



## Regent Honeyeater at Nowra

(*Anthochaera phrygia*)

This beautiful and strongly migratory honeyeater is one of the three known Critically Endangered species of the Jervis CMA area, all of which have been on the sightings and news agenda in the Shoalhaven this Warm season.

This particular bird was seen hanging out with other honeyeaters among trees adjacent to the Shoalhaven Council building in Nowra. What great support for urban tree advocacy, but even that argument was embellished when regular sightings of the species (possibly the same bird) occurred in the Wollongong Botanic Gardens.



photo: Kim Touzel

The Regent Honeyeater is Critically Endangered federally and in NSW and Victoria, and Endangered in Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia. There are limited recorded sightings in the Atlas of Living Australia (ALA) in the Shoalhaven.

## Hooded Plover at Shoalhaven Heads

(*Thinornis rubricollis*)

This species completes the trio of Critically Endangered species in the Jervis CMA region. The well-known pair (C7 and E6) from Booderee National Park produced three chicks from a second nest, two of which survived and fledged in 2018. These individuals are at the far northern limit of the distribution of the species in S E Australia. There are 60 individual birds in NSW.



photo: Ralph Stadus

Given the rarity of the species and their lack of reproductive success, this was a very special event. It became even more remarkable when one of the unflagged, juvenile pair turned up at Shoalhaven Heads recently. An alert Illawarra birder not only got a good sighting but good photographs. Well done Ralph.

## Glossy Black Cockatoo hen at Bherwerre Wetland

(*Calyptoryhynchus lathami*)

No sooner had Norm Webb and friends enjoyed the formal opening and NPWS talk at the Jervis Bay Maritime Museum for the "Save Our Glossies" planting site, than a special report of the species turned up. Norm was told of some Glossy Black Cockatoos hanging out in the Bherwerre Wetland and passed on the message for investigation. Sure enough the female (below) and a juvenile male were settled in on casuarinas on the bank of Cockrow Creek feasting on their favourite food. Well at least a pestered but patient mum was, though the juvenile was getting good directions to self-sufficiency. The bird catalogue for Bherwerre Wetland, established by BLS members, had not included the threatened species to date over three years of observations, so it was a special sighting. The species is Vulnerable in all four states where it occurs and is Endangered at a Federal level.

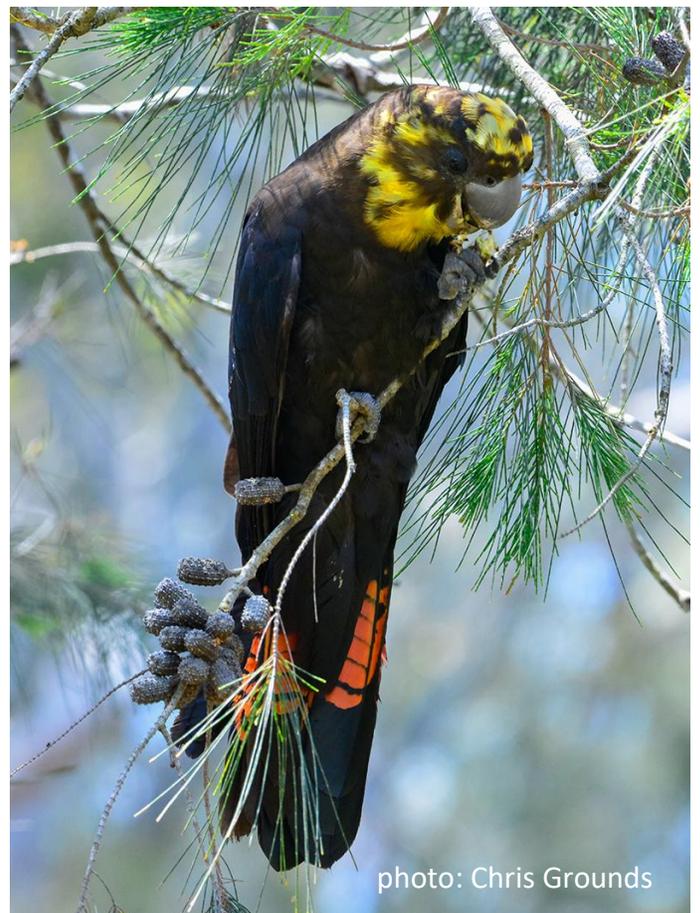


photo: Chris Grounds

## Buff-banded Rail at Sanctuary Point

(*Gallirallus philippensis*)

Keen birder, Christine Rigg, was exploring the Sanctuary Point Road Reserve near her home when the bird below popped out of the lush ground vegetation. A quick sighting and a mobile phone photo certainly suggests a Buff-banded Rail and this has been followed by some other possible sightings. A quite rare sighting?



photo: Christine Rigg

The species is "Secure" however the Atlas of Living Australia shows no recorded sightings for the Illawarra or Shoalhaven of this bird, though there are a number on the Far South Coast. The Birddata Atlas has three single sightings in the Bay and Basin, though Sussex Inlet has thirteen recorded sightings. This may simply reflect that the Birddata information has not yet been transferred over to the ALA, and/or there is a keen birder at Sussex Inlet!

## Bar-tailed Godwit at Sanctuary Point

(*Limosa lapponica*)

The remarkable, migratory, threatened Bar-tailed Godwit is well enough known to Shoalhaven birders. We are used to seeing them in coastal shoreline places like Lake Wollumboola, usually in large flocks.



photo: Chris Grounds

However, in a "first on record" in the ALA for St Georges Basin, a solo bird turned up on a shoal at Paradise Beach at Sanctuary Point. It remained for a few days hanging out with other shore and water birds at a creek entrance before moving on to places unknown.

## Peacocks in the Park (male Indian Peafowl)

For some weeks before Xmas, two Peacocks were seen beside Naval College Road, slowly making their way toward Booderee NP. They ended up at Greenpatch prior to joining the Bristol Point campers, convincing some unsuspecting visitors they were actually part of the park's birdlife. Talk about "birds in your backyard"!

The origins of the birds lay in their purchase or hire for wedding ceremonies, particularly on beaches. Apparently peacocks make a nice embellishment to wedding photos, but they tend to wander off ...



## Urban Tree Nesting

The Australian Raven, Red Wattlebird, Magpie Lark and Australian Hobby are not threatened species - so how do they belong to the theme of this article?

Well it comes down to one of the major conservation issues in the Shoalhaven and its urban areas - native tree preservation and associated habitat preservation.

Two individual trees, a Scribbly Gum and a Spotted Gum, each within ten metres of the "To The Point" Café in the main shopping centre at Sanctuary Point and within easy vision whilst relaxing over a great coffee, have offered great nest observations.

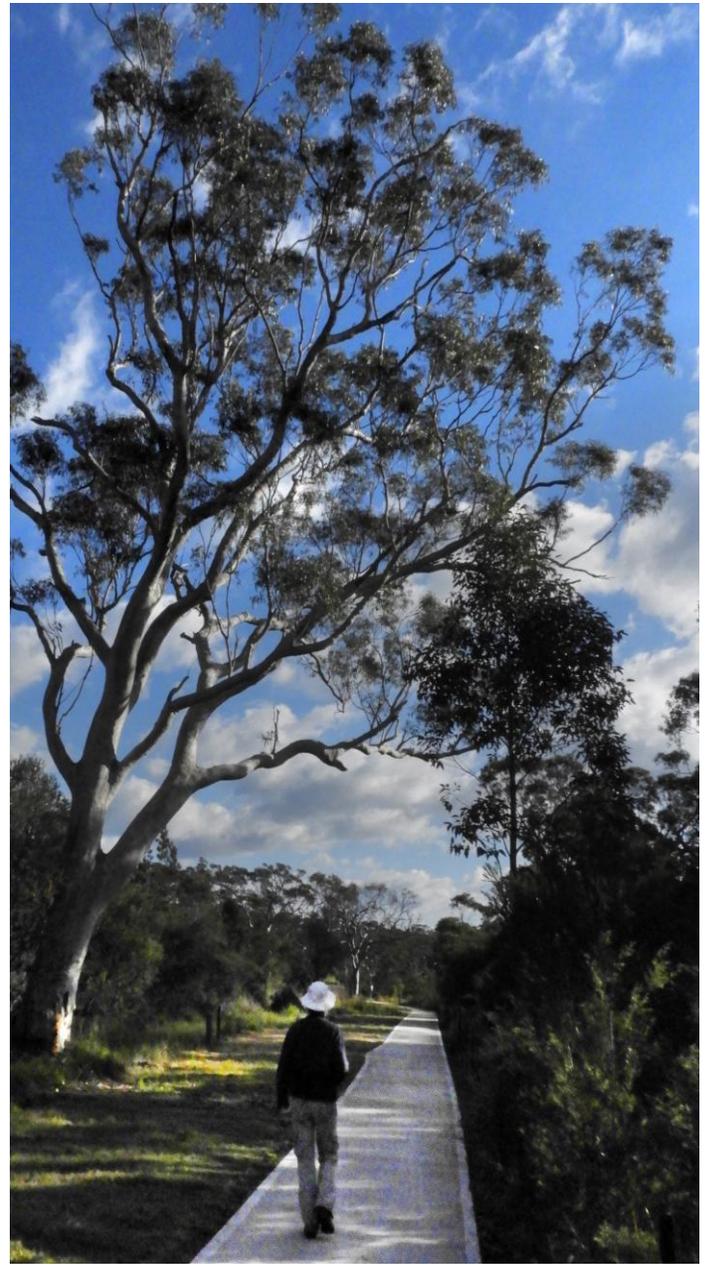
Very relaxed birding!



The Magpie Lark (above) and Red Wattlebird (above right) nested right on the busy street in the Scribbly Gum. The Australian Raven (below) nested in the Spotted Gum behind the café.

A follow-on attempt to use this discarded nest by an Australian Hobby was foiled by some Sulphur-crested Cockatoo aggression.

What value the urban tree?



## Wilfords Lane Wetlands

- by Charles Dove

After arriving in Ulladulla I was first introduced to the Wilfords Lane Wetlands by local knowledgeable birding enthusiast Bob Rusk, and was later introduced to the owner of the access farm to the wetlands, Wal Payten. I developed a friendship with Wal, and over the years since he would inform me about what he has been seeing on the wetland. His family first established this farm in the 1880's and has helped to maintain and protect this secluded wetland south of Milton on the edge of upper Burrill Lake.



The Milton Ulladulla region has proved to be very rich and diverse in birdlife and, in particular, the Wilfords Lane Wetlands - with over 134 species having been recorded in this small area.

The waters of the wetlands have two sections, one section being a lot more brackish than the other. The image at left shows just part of the first pond which is fed by two fresh water streams on one side, and a salt water tidal inlet on the other. The upper pond (not seen in the image) is mainly fresh water and has a lot more reeds etc. on the edges.

Large numbers of ducks and marsh birds inhabit the first pond during the year, accompanied by various waders in the summer migration months.

*The ponds are **both on Private Property** and can only be accessed with the owner's permission. For more details please contact Charles Dove 0417 422 302 or email [powerart@bigpond.net.au](mailto:powerart@bigpond.net.au)*

The ponds are both surrounded by grassland with a mix of tussock and saltmarsh vegetation and will often have cattle and sheep feeding in the paddocks, which seems to supply a few nutrients to the ponds as well.



Grey Teal



Hardhead



Pacific Black Duck



Australian Shoveler



Australian Shelduck



Pink-eared Duck



Sharp-tailed Sandpiper



Marsh Sandpiper



Common Greenshank



Golden-headed Cisticola



Little Grassbird



Australian Reed Warbler



Brown Quail



Australasian Pipit



Rufous Songlark



Yellow-rumped Thornbill



Brown Thornbill



Eastern Rosella

The creeks supplying fresh water are lined with a number of different reeds and grasses and are host to a number of different birds. Superb Fairy-wrens and Red-browed Finches can be seen all year, but during summer Golden-headed Cisticolas, Little Grassbirds and Australian Reed-Warblers arrive, while the adjacent fields are often a home to Brown Quail, Australasian Pipit, Rufous Songlark and many other species.

The mostly freshwater pond does attract a number of birds, but not as many as the brackish pond, in particular Black Swans, which often nest there, Australasian Grebe and, during the summer, the Latham's Snipe is a regular with the Australian Painted Snipe on the odd occasion.

Many raptors are attracted to the ponds and benefit from the many food sources, both large and small. The Australian Hobby is often seen taking dragonflies around the ponds, the Black-shouldered Kite and Nankeen Kestrel can be seen hovering over the fields for mice and lizards, with the larger raptors like the Wedge-tailed Eagles, White-bellied Sea-Eagles, Whistling Kites, Brown Falcons and Swamp Harriers feeding on whatever they can catch. The raptors can be seen around the ponds for most of the year.

Chris Brandis, a fellow enthusiastic birder, and I often visit the wetlands and sometimes come across the Latham's Snipe near the tussocks in summer, but one time we were fortunate to see them up close feeding along the edge of the freshwater pond.

#### **Bird hides for the wetlands**

With the recent construction of the Burrill Lake Bridge some funds have been made available as compensation for damage to the seagrass of the lake area around the bridge. A portion of these funds has been set aside to help preserve these wetlands with the co-operation of the owners, and through **Andrew Britton**, the Land Services Officer, South East Local Land Services.

I met with Andrew accidentally one day and he mentioned what he was doing. I told him of my interest in these wetlands and found that our interests were very similar.

After a number of discussions about fencing and bird hides, I volunteered to assist with the construction of some bird hides on both properties.

I managed to get permission from the owners - Wal and Terry - for the bird hides to be built on their properties.



Latham's Snipe



Black Swan



Royal Spoonbill



Nankeen Kestrel



White-bellied Sea-Eagle



Whistling Kite



Australian Hobby



Straw-necked Ibis

After drawing up a rough sketch I approached the Ulladulla Men's Shed to see if they were interested in doing the initial building of the panels needed to construct the bird hides, and they agreed - if I could get some plans drawn up.

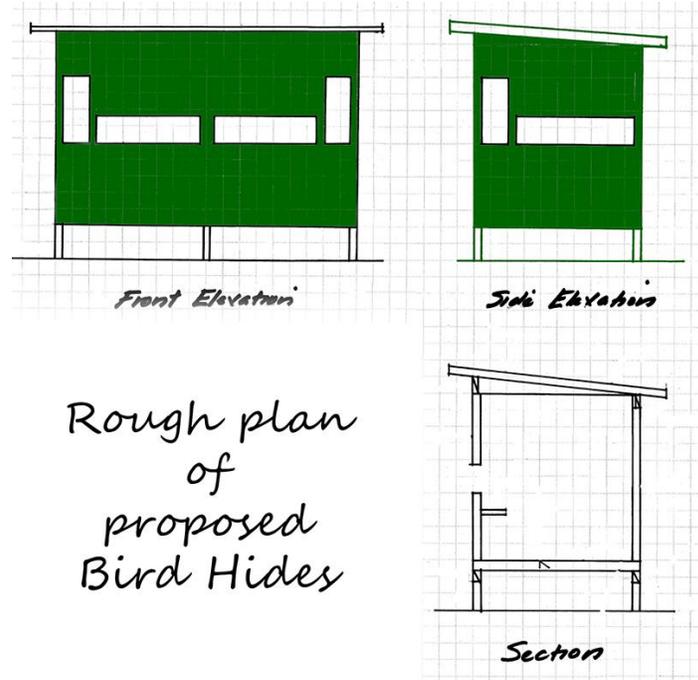
With this in mind I approached another of our keen bird club members, Mike Jefferis (BirdLife Shoalhaven committee member), who has the ability and skills needed, and thankfully he agreed. At present the plans and costings have been submitted to Andrew and we are waiting to see if he can organize the necessary funding.

If (when) successful we will need volunteers to erect the partially assembled bird hides under the direction of Mike Jefferis. Two of the bird hides will be stand alone and the other will need to be fenced in with a gate.

A couple of signs for each bird hide have also been costed and will include the history of the Wetlands given by Wal Wilford from the family history since 1880, as well as many bird photos and a bird list of this special area.

The logos of both the MUDbirders and BirdLife Shoalhaven along with the Ulladulla Men's Shed and other involved participants are to be included.

Chris Brandis, Bob Rusk and myself have made up a bird list for this site. Some of the sightings might surprise a few people, and help make us realize how important this area is for the Shoalhaven's natural history.



**Bird List for Wilfords Lane Wetlands - Milton NSW**

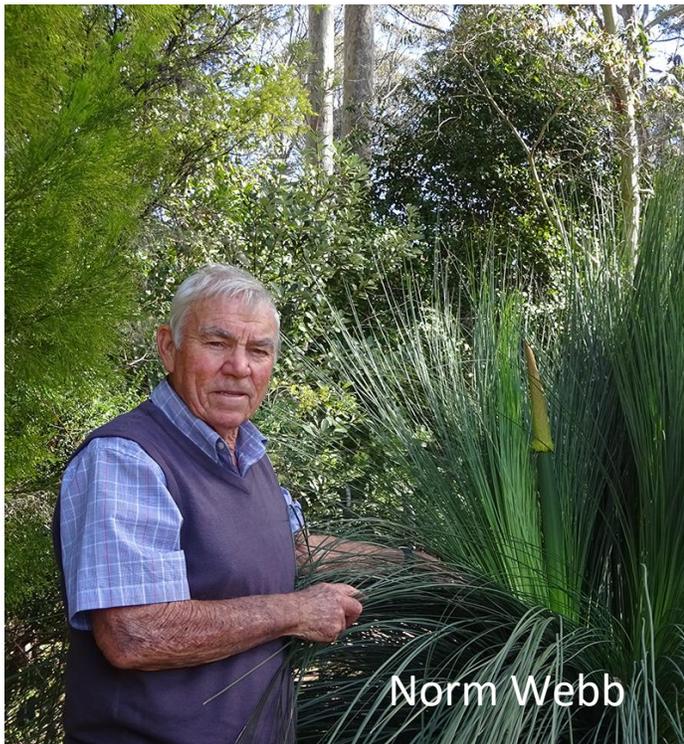
Canada Goose	Red-kneed Dotterel	Little Eagle	Yellow-rumped Thornbill
Black Swan	Black-fronted Dotterel	Wedge-tailed Eagle	Yellow Thornbill
Australian Shelduck	Bar-tailed Godwit	Swamp Harrier	Grey Butcherbird
Australian Wood Duck	Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	Brown Goshawk	Australian Magpie
Australasian Shoveler	Curlew Sandpiper	Collared Sparrowhawk	Pied Currawong
Pacific Black Duck	Long-toed Stint	Whistling Kite	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike
Grey Teal	Australian Painted Snipe	White-bellied Sea-Eagle	White-winged Triller
Chestnut Teal	Latham's Snipe	Azure Kingfisher	Grey Shrike-thrush
Pink-eared Duck	Common Greenshank	Laughing Kookaburra	Golden Whistler
Hardhead	Marsh Sandpiper	Sacred Kingfisher	Rufous Whistler
Musk Duck	Wood Sandpiper	Nankeen Kestrel	Olive-backed Oriole
Brown Quail	Silver Gull	Australian Hobby	Australasian Figbird
Australasian Grebe	Caspian Tern	Brown Falcon	Willie Wagtail
Hoary-headed Grebe	Whiskered Tern	Peregrine Falcon	Grey Fantail
White-headed Pigeon	Crested Tern	Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo	Magpie-lark
Spotted Dove	Little Pied Cormorant	Galah	Leaden Flycatcher
Crested Pigeon	Great Cormorant	Long-billed Corella	Satin Flycatcher
Wonga Pigeon	Little Black Cormorant	Little Corella	Australian Raven
Bar-shouldered Dove	Australian Pelican	Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	Eastern Yellow Robin
Topknot Pigeon	White-necked Heron	Crimson Rosella	Welcome Swallow
Pacific Koel	Great Egret	Eastern Rosella	Fairy Martin
Channel-billed Cuckoo	White-faced Heron	Rainbow Lorikeet	Tree Martin
Fan-tailed Cuckoo	Little Egret	Satin Bowerbird	Australian Reed Warbler
Buff-banded Rail	Cattle Egret	Southern Emu-wren	Little Grassbird
Black-tailed Native-hen	Striated Heron	Variiegated Fairywren	Rufous Songlark
Australian Spotted Crake	Nankeen Night-Heron	Superb Fairywren	Golden-headed Cisticola
Dusky Moorhen	Glossy Ibis	Eastern Spinebill	Silveryeye
Australasian Swamphen	Australian White Ibis	Lewin's Honeyeater	Common Starling
Pied Stilt	Straw-necked Ibis	Yellow-faced Honeyeater	Common Myna
Red-necked Avocet	Royal Spoonbill	Little Wattlebird	Mistletoebird
Pacific Golden-Plover	Yellow-billed Spoonbill	Red Wattlebird	Australasian Pipit
Masked Lapwing	Osprey	New Holland Honeyeater	House Sparrow
Double-banded Plover	Black-shouldered Kite	Noisy Friarbird	Red-browed Finch
Red-capped Plover	Square-tailed Kite	Brown Thornbill	

## An Interview with Norm Webb

- with Brett Davis

Norm Webb lives in St Georges Basin with his wife Maureen. Since moving to the area almost 30 years ago, he has been a proactive volunteer in organisations like NANA, Bushcare and Parkcare, and has promoted bird conservation through a long series of articles in a local magazine, and by spreading awareness of the threat to small birds by domestic cats in urban and suburban areas.

Norm's garden has been purpose-built for small birds and other wildlife, and he has helped neighbours build similar gardens which have been linked through a streetscaped corridor. Also, three public reserves in St Georges Basin have benefited from Norm's great work.



The interview took place on Norm's back deck overlooking his backyard on January 11th 2019.

BLS: So Norm, can you tell me about your early life?

NW: I was born in 1941, so I'm 77. I grew up in Maroubra in Sydney in the late 1940s and early 50s. There were large areas of sandstone escarpment, scrub, stone quarries and sand hills. I remember finding a Blue Wren's nest and was taken by the beauty of these small birds. Other birds I remember seeing are Silvereyes, Turtle-doves, Bulbuls and Indian Mynas.

BLS: Your interest in birds started when you were a child?

NW: That's right. I did keep pigeons at one time, and I kept Yorkshire Canaries, so I was into aviary birds as well. Yorkshire Canaries are one of the breeds. They are a little bit bigger than a normal canary; they are quite robust.



BLS: Was Maroubra a good place to live?

NW: It had large areas undeveloped - it's a bit sad to go back there now - but there was a group of us who hung around together. It wasn't far to the beach and we were always up in the scrub which wasn't very far away.

The sandstone escarpments were great, but they have all been blown apart and there are bloody big houses built there now. It's a real horror to go back there to see what they've done to it.

We had a wonderful time in the area. We used to go to quarries and catch Green and Gold Bell Frogs, and take them home and put them in our ponds. They were everywhere at the time - nowhere near getting on the endangered list.

All those places are gone now. The quarry doesn't even have any water in it - they've turned it into a park! You can still see the cuttings that was done where the stone was taken out, but they filled them in with soil and covered them with grass.

BLS: What did you do when you left school?

NW: I was an apprentice carpenter and worked in the building trade, but I eventually joined the railways, still as a carpenter, but most of the work just involved building billboards - nothing of any great importance, but it was a good, steady job, and I stayed in it for 23 years.

BLS: When did you leave Maroubra?

NW: When I was 27 I got married and moved to Eastlakes, which is near Mascot. There are a couple of golf courses there - The Lakes, and the Eastlake Golf Club. Later on I used to play golf at Eastlakes - it was a working class golf course and it was pretty cheap to play, but it was similar to the Lakes - the flash golf course - where it cost a fortune. We still had the lovely lakes and the birds.

*(Some Red-browed Finches fly into Norm's bird feeder)*

BLS: Your bird feeder looks like an old birdcage. Is it open at the back for the birds to get in?



NW: No, I've taken out some of the bars, which leaves a gap about an inch wide, so the finches and wrens can slip through, but bigger birds, and possums and gliders can't get in there to eat the seed. I take it in every night because we had rats coming to it at one stage, and that's not good, so I take it in at night, and in the morning I put it back out and refresh the food.

BLS: What sort of seed do you feed the birds?

NW: It's Trill Canary and Finch Mix. It mainly contains millet - about five different kinds. It is good for small birds, but if you use a wild bird mix then all birds will find something they like in it, even big birds like wattlebirds and cockatoos that you don't necessarily want in your garden. So I use the Canary and Finch Mix, and have a bird feeder that only small birds can get into.



I had only seen one Red-browed Finch in the garden - about 20 years ago! Then about 4 years ago I saw one at the water bowl, so I went straight over to the shop and bought the Trill and put it in a bowl near the water bowl. The next day there were a couple of finches at the bowl, and by the end of the week there was half a dozen!

That was when I decided to build the little raised house and put the bowl inside the cage that only the little birds can get into, and we have now had up to 20 Red-browed Finches in the feeder at some stage!

BLS: Back to your life story. You were married and living in Eastlakes with your first wife ...

NW: Yes, and we had three children. Working full time and bringing up three children meant no birdwatching for a while. After the marriage ended, I met Maureen (at a Parents without Partners meeting) in 1986 and we were married a couple of years later.

(We take a break because Norm's Superb Fairy Wrens have turned up and he feeds them a few mealworms)

NW: You have to be committed to feed birds mealworms, because they are expensive - \$15 for 100 grams (\$150 a kilo!) - which only lasts about three weeks. There has been a lot of debate lately about feeding birds. Some people say it makes the birds dependent, but it doesn't. During the past week while the rain has been happening and there are lots of insects to eat, the wrens get really blasé and don't come around much at all.

But when they are feeding babies, they come to us for a mealworm and then fly away to the nest, so we can find their nests, and can study their behaviour and breeding successes and failures. We have found that the *Lomandra longifolia* is one of their favourite nesting places. The plants have prickly flowers in their centres and the birds build their nests deep down inside.

I plan to write an article for the BLS magazine about bird feeding, and why I think that what I'm doing is fine, and why it is good for the birds. There are lots of reasons, but one of them is that it keeps them here in this safe garden rather than out there where cats can get them.

(Norm points out a female Superb Fairy-wren with a really short tail)

NW: See that bird - something's had a go at it. It turned up like that one day, and it's not a baby. It seems quite alright. It could have been a Wattlebird; it could have been a Kookaburra; it could have been a cat; but something's had a go at it! Anyhow, it's okay now.

(Norm points to a plant in a pot in the corner of his deck)

NW: That plant over there is a foreigner - a Dipladenia. It has another, more modern name - Mandevilla. It adds a bit of colour. I'm starting to relax some of my "rules and views" on only having Australian natives in the garden. There are other non-natives that I like too - like the bromeliads. I have a few of them in the garden now, and Eastern Spinebills are going into them and getting the nectar out of the little hollow in the middle.

Anyhow, I got back into birdwatching after I met Maureen. Her parents had a huge block of land down there (Norm points) on the lake (St Georges Basin). Maureen had been coming down here from Sydney almost every weekend and holidays since she was a little girl. She brought me down here to meet her mother and family, and when I saw how nice the area was, with the lake and all the beautiful birds, I suggested to Maureen that we buy our own block of land here.

We bought this block in 1987, and came down to work on the house every weekend for three years.

I was still working for the railways, but there were rumours in the air about redundancies, which I grabbed as soon as the first one came up! I just wanted to get out of Sydney and get away to the country.

We moved into this house in 1991, when I was 50. The money from the redundancy payment wasn't huge but it was enough to partially pay off the mortgage on the house. Later on I took all my super as well - you can't do that anymore - so I paid off the house with that.

We really got into the birds then, and the gardens. We joined the Australian Plant Society, and the Australian Conservation Foundation. We got right into natural things. I always had it in mind to build a native garden. Even before we finished the house, I got sick of working on it, so Maureen and I would go outside to work on the garden. It gave us a break and helped us keep going.

BLS: Was this verandah a big part of the plan?

NW: Originally it was only half this width, but luckily I made it bigger. And verandahs are such wonderful places, especially when they overlook your native garden. And that's when we really started noticing the native birds, and I have learned so much about them since then.



I remember the very first bird that I got really excited about. I raced inside and I said "Maureen - you've got to come and look at this - it's a hummingbird!" We were gobsmacked! After, I asked everyone what sort of bird it was - an Eastern Spinebill, of course!

Then, just over there (*Norm points*) was a hole that we had dug out - a septic tank - and we were here working on the house when we looked down and there was a little bird looking at the side of the hole. It was a Spotted Pardalote - and we were gobsmacked with that too!



And then we started finding all these other wonderful birds - Golden Whistlers and Yellow Robins and stuff, and we were just stunned with the birds that were coming to our garden. It was just like the world was opening up to us, especially compared with Sydney.

We used to see Eastern Rosellas when we first came down here, but they seem to prefer open spaces and we haven't seen many of them since the area became more developed and more houses were built. The other bird that we used to see but we seem to have lost in this area over the past 20 years is the Gang Gang Cockatoo.

But the excitement of seeing a new bird was an incredible thing. It's still really good to see a Pardalote or an Eastern Spinebill, but it's not quite as exciting as that first time.

BLS: Do you keep a house list of birds?

NW: We do, and it is somewhere in the mid 80s. We have had some wonderful birds show up - a Pacific Baza a few years ago, a Wonga Pigeon, a Painted Button-quail, and we have Whipbirds here on a regular basis.

BLS: Did you work after age 50 after you moved here?

NW: I didn't do any full-time work again, but I did carpentry jobs around the area; some painting; I would do just about anything; I even built a garage once.

BLS: And when did you go into full retirement?

NW: Probably around the age of 59 or 60 - so about 2000 - which was early to retire I know, but I started doing a lot of volunteer work for groups that I thought were a good thing - like Bushcare.

I think that was the time we did Grasstree Reserve (a small block of land opposite the St Georges Basin shops). I remember that you and Karen were there - I've got the photo around somewhere ...



BLS: So when did you join BirdLife Australia?

NW: It was a fair while ago, but we were in the Bird Observers Club when we first came down and we stayed in that for quite a while. We joined Birds Australia in 2009, and it merged with the Bird Observers Club to form BirdLife Australia a few years later. We formed our own birdwatching club - the Basin Birdwatchers - in about 1996. That was when we started making our first "cat awareness" signs. We had a meeting here with about eight or ten people, and they said I could be President - I don't think anyone else was terribly interested in the job!

We went out birdwatching and had some meetings, but we realized quite early that a submission from a community group carries much more weight than a submission from a couple of old ratepayers, so we made up a letterhead with a Grey Fantail as a logo and we used that letterhead for the Basin Birdwatchers when we sent in submissions to Council about environmental issues.

The names we chose for the Bushcare reserves, and the size of the signs we put up, were designed to promote the environment. If you are going to have a sign, don't hide your light under a bushel, make it a big one! They don't allow signs like that now - they want you to have all these piddly little signs with little lettering - but with Grasstree Reserve, Blue Wrens Retreat, and Firetail Creek, we wanted the environmental names out there.



Before we got involved, those reserves were called something like SGB92 or SGB17, but we made application to the Council for new names, and they agreed, and they put the names into the Geographical Names Board. It took about six months, but those names are all on the map these days. We certainly didn't want the reserves named after some bloke - however deserving he might be - it's boring and doesn't contribute to conservation.

The idea seemed to catch on, so now there's reserves in Sanctuary Point called Boobook Reserve and Yellow-bellied Glider Reserve. So we got that flavour out there!

It is good to get the message out. That's why I wrote an article a month for nearly ten years for the About magazine (a community magazine for the Bay and Basin area). I wrote mostly about birds. Rather than boring old facts, I tried to bring some life into the articles by writing about actual happenings in our backyard. Sometimes I added some spin, but only to get the message out!

The "cat awareness" pamphlets and signs were part of the same campaign. A fellow called Lex Metcalf was an artist and had a similar attitude to cats as me. I got involved with him through stencilling. He advertised in the paper for a volunteer to help him. He worked for the Council and would stencil lettering on gutters with messages on them like "Whales don't like eating rubbish" or something similar and we used to spray them on gutters where the water flows out to the sea or creeks.



Lex was the one who came up with the idea of using Coreflute - the stuff they use for real estate signs - and we posted them all over Australia. People tell me they saw our cat awareness signs up in Darwin or down in Tasmania.

We put ads for the signs in environmental magazines and sold over 1,500 over the years. It was all not-for-profit. We charged \$5 which just covered our costs. We never made any money out of them - but the signs got the message out!

BLS: So when did you develop your aversion to cats?

NW: It was probably after I came down here, because I actually owned a couple of cats when I was a kid. In fact, just before I left work I found a stray cat and I took it to a fellow who wanted to look after it.

I went with my cat signs to a Native Animal Network Association (NANA) meeting in 1996. Some people there understood the impact that cats have on wildlife, but there were also people there who loved cats because they love every bloody thing so they are looking after all animals - I don't know what makes them tick!

I then joined NANA and I was in that for ten years, and I was the Vice President for seven of those years!

BLS: Can you tell me something about the Network?

NW: They are now called Wildlife Rescue South Coast. Maureen and I had an aviary here, and we looked after injured wildlife and birds. Unfortunately, most of the birds come in with broken wings, and there is no hope for them. You get sick of euthanizing animals and it really gets you down after a while, because not many of them can be saved. In the end I just couldn't cope with it and I gave it away.

BLS: Did you see a lot of animals injured or killed by cats during your time with NANA?

NW: When I was with NANA I learned that cats killed a lot of possums - ring-tailed possums especially. And there were a lot of birds brought in that had been bitten by cats. One thing about cats that people might not be aware of, is that the claws and teeth of cats carry over 60 different types of bacteria, and once a possum or bird has been attacked by a cat it almost always dies within a day.

BLS: Were you responsible for the streetscaping outside?

NW: We are great believers in connectivity. Putting in native gardens and bird-friendly gardens is great, but connecting them is so much better.

We put in the garden outside the Scout Hall up the road, and we helped with two different gardens in the houses on either side of the road down on the corner, and we thought it would be a great idea to connect them all up with a narrow garden down one side of the street.



We also do Parkcare for the Council, so I rang them up and asked for some money for plants so we could do the streetscaping. But they refused, saying that once we got too old to maintain the street gardens that we put in, then Council would have to start maintaining them, and they would not be able to do it. That was disappointing.

But now the street has been streetscaped and birds have a safe corridor that they can use to move to all the gardens up and down the street.

**Parkcare:** The aim of the Shoalhaven Council's Parkcare program is to promote and implement ecologically sustainable management of the parks and reserves within the City of Shoalhaven by encouraging community ownership of the natural environment and supporting community members to become involved in group activities.

BLS: I notice you have a possum highway ...

NW: The Possum Highway was built around 20 years ago and connects the trees of four houses with ships' ropes that I was able to acquire from Marine rescue, Ulladulla Harbour. After recently erecting a new Colourbond fence on our own property that replaced a paling fence, I put some ships' ropes that I still had on the top of the fence so the possums could still travel this section of the highway as they had previously done. The Possum highway works very well. The possums use it all the time!



Rope on top of fence

BLS: You use your carpentry skills to build possum boxes?

NW: Yes, I have made possum boxes and they have worked quite well, for ring-tails and brush-tails.

BLS: I hear you lost a ring-tailed possum to a Powerful Owl a while back.

NW: The ring-tail was in the Casuarina out the front and the Powerful Owl came down and grabbed it. They have massive claws and once it had the possum it just pumped the claws into its body. The possum was screaming, which is what alerted us to the attack. We ran out the front to see what was happening. By this time the possum was dead and the Powerful Owl was a bit caught up by its wings in the Casuarina. It dropped the possum and flew up into a tree next door, so we put the dead possum under the tree for the owl. I had heard that Powerful Owls rarely attack anything on the ground. It just looked at the possum for a while and then flew off without it, but since that time people have told me that they do take things on the ground, like rabbits, so I guess you just have to sort that one out for yourself. That would have been twenty years ago now.

*(A White-browed Scrubwren appears. Norm goes away to get mealworms for it. The Scrubwren flutters up off the ground to take a mealworm from Norm's hand)*

NW: He's very tame. He is probably my second favourite bird now, vying for favouritism with the Blue Wren! We had a couple of them here for a few months, and then they went away for about six weeks before coming back with two babies in tow!

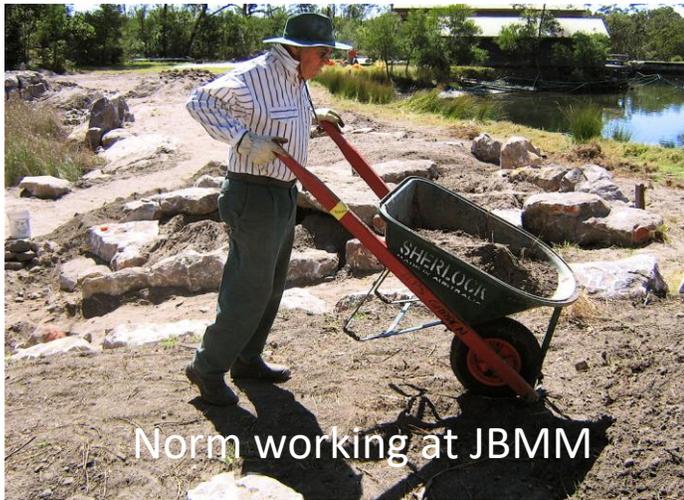
We also had Brown Thornbills nest in a Lomandra out the front a few years ago, and recently Spotted Pardalotes nested in the retaining wall in the backyard. They raised three babies. I saw two of them come out of the tunnel, and I ran up to get Maureen and she saw the third one come out. They flew up into a bottlebrush and sat there for a while, and then they started testing their wings just like on David Attenborough, and the next thing they were off up into the trees. So they are basically ready to fly as soon as they come out of the nest!



Possum box, platform and rope highway

BLS: Basin Bushcare still maintains three local reserves?

NW: Yes we do, but it is getting a bit harder now. Basin Bushcare is just Maureen and me and one other, and we try to get out every Wednesday, but it is getting more difficult and I am a bit concerned about what might happen when I'm not around anymore. We are always looking for people who wouldn't mind lending a hand in the reserves occasionally. We once had "work for the dole" blokes helping us out, and they were good for doing the grunt work and heavy lifting - like paths and rock work - but they were not really good for removing weeds or pruning which needs a bit more knowledge. We don't even have them anymore.



BLS: You work at the Jervis Bay Maritime Museum (JBMM)?

NW: I've been volunteering there for about 25 or 30 years, and have been the coordinator for their APS (Australian Plant Society) Garden - Wirreecoo Garden - for 18 years. You walk through it when you come down the steps from the car park. I built those steps years ago. It took two months, working on my own, and I built the seats around the garden, and the signs too.

BLS: And you put in a rainforest area as well?



NW: We call it "The Glen". A few years ago we moved a pond from a silly place up near the carpark where a pond would never be, down onto the flat with steps leading to it. We are planting rainforest plants in the area.

BLS: How important is water in the garden?

NW: Clean water bowls in the garden are vital for the birds and wildlife in the area. I would urge all readers to add bird baths and water bowls to their own gardens, especially when we have hot weather - and make sure they keep them filled and keep them clean.

In fact, it wouldn't be a bad idea for someone from BirdLife Shoalhaven to ring in to local radio talk shows over the Summer months and advertise the importance of water for the birds.

It would help the birds, it would raise awareness, it would promote birdwatching and it would further the reputation of the organisation.

It is like the cat signs, or the big signs on the reserves - it all helps to send the message about improving urban and suburban environments to help our birds.



BLS: How did your "Save the Glossies" happen?

NW: There is a section of forest adjacent to the JBMM that is a Bushcare site. It's crown land, and it is under an aboriginal land claim, but Alistair Stratton - the Bushcare Coordinator - got permission for a Bushcare site there.

After the 2001 bushfire wiped out the Wirrecoo Garden it went right through that bushland as well, and the first things to grow on a site adjacent to any human activity are weeds. The site became weed-infested, so we started slowly getting rid of the weeds. Eventually I came up with the idea of planting the area with Casuarinas as a project to save the Glossy Black Cockatoo.

Once again, it is all about showing off and being noticed, so that people see that something is going on there, and we're talking about it, and hopefully people will start doing something about it too.

In the last BLS magazine (Spring 2018) there was an article about "Save our Glossies" with a picture of me and Lauren Hook (OEH Threatened Species Officer) and Hugh Capes with one of the four nesting boxes Hugh was donating for the Glossies. Since then, Hugh has hired a contractor with a giant cherry-picker to put up 4 nesting boxes in the trees adjacent to the Bushcare site at the JBMM - at his own expense! It is a great credit to him!



Hugh,  
Lauren  
and Norm

Hugh received advice about locating the boxes from OEH - for example, they are not to be closer than 50 metres to each other. I could see two of the nesting boxes quite easily, but Hugh had to show me where the other two boxes were located.

Even if we never get a Glossy Black Cockatoo to nest in the boxes, I think it has been a really worthwhile exercise because it shows everyone that there are a lot of people in the rest of the world who really care about birds!

BLS: On our Facebook page last year there was a report about the planting of almost 100 Casuarinas by BLS members in the Bushcare site. How are the plants going?

NW: The Casuarinas are going really well. We might have lost a couple of them, but almost all of them are good. A lot of grass has grown up around them and we really need to have another working bee to get the grass from around the base of them. Once that is done, I think I will be able to spray the rest of the grass to get rid of it, but I am waiting for the right weather conditions to do that.

I think that it is important to have really visible projects, because it inspires people, and maybe leads to even more projects and good works - like the viewing platform project at Lake Wollumboola, or the bird hide project at the Wilfords Lane Wetlands. It's a good way to let the public see that there is something going on!

BLS: Is there anything else you would like to say to our readers?

NW: Maureen and I enjoy birdwatching, but we are not experts. We enjoy the experience, we enjoy the company and we do like seeing the birds that other people point out. We are just sort of "tag-alongers" really ...

I find it hard to accept that many people don't notice our small birds or do anything to help them. What the heck is wrong with them? Most of our friends have a connection with birds, native animals and native areas. Gardens, birds and wildlife bring so much joy to Maureen and myself. It would be tragic to lose them!



## Lake Wollumboola "Developments"

- by Frances Bray

This contribution covers a range of issues affecting birds at Lake Wollumboola.

It is pleasing to report that our home pair of Pied Oystercatchers successfully raised a fledgling, the first since the 2014 - 2015 nesting season, after foxes and human disturbance caused loss of nests in the intervening years. The Little Terns made a late appearance with 3 chicks hatched on 5<sup>th</sup> January, also the first chicks since the 2014-15 nesting season.



The NPWS Shorebird volunteers are pleased to welcome Lachlan Hall and Thomas Burley, both University of Wollongong students, as part of the "Save Our Species" Program for Migratory wading birds.

At Lake Wollumboola they completed migratory bird surveys, including at the Downs and Coonemia Creek entrances, areas of the lake which are difficult to access.

It is concerning that recent and longer-term weather extremes likely associated with climate change have adversely impacted on habitat quality and the extent, diversity and numbers of migratory waders and indigenous water birds.

Although disturbance from prawners and crabbers was high during Winter / Spring, it has reduced during January 2019. Once again however, Lake Wollumboola faces the threat of development expansion, with the revival of the Lot 1 East Crescent subdivision proposal immediately adjacent to the Lake Wollumboola northern shore.

The Pied Oystercatcher pair nested on a low mudflat extending from the north east bay saltmarsh with the first egg laid on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2018. One chick disappeared soon after hatching. Dimitris Bertzeletos advised that another chick was likely taken at about 2 weeks by a juvenile Sea-Eagle.

The pair kept their last chick well-hidden until 29<sup>th</sup> November when I observed the young bird emerge from the protection of the saltmarsh and fly with its parents to the lake shallows. It is such a pleasure to see it most days feeding and flying with the adults.

It is great once again to experience the intricate mating flight of Little Terns. Most are fishing and roosting on distant mudflats. However, four pairs are nesting on the saltmarsh mudflats, with three chicks hatched. They appear to be out of the way of foxes, but not the prawners and crabbers.

With regard to migratory waders, low lake levels during Winter-Spring due to ongoing drought offered hope of excellent conditions this summer. Sharp-tailed Sandpipers, Red-necked Stints, Ruddy Turnstones, Pacific Golden Plovers and one Great Knot supplemented the high numbers of overwintering birds - including Eastern Curlews and Bar-tailed Godwits.

Large numbers of Sharp-tailed Sandpipers appeared during September. These were understood to result from dry conditions over central Australia, with 126 counted in September near the east shore saltmarsh and a further 197 small waders further south (the majority likely to be Sharp-tailed Sandpipers).



However, these and other migratory birds were blown away by successive low-pressure systems accompanied by severe wind storms throughout November and continuing into December. By contrast only 2 Sharp-tailed Sandpipers were counted on 1<sup>st</sup> December and these were observed in the more sheltered North West Bay.



Sharp-tailed Sandpipers

Wind and rain also reduced local wading bird numbers including Black-winged Stilts and Red-necked Avocets as well as water birds. Grey Teal numbers dropped from over 1,000 in October to 423 in December. Black Swan numbers were also reduced with several found around the lake shore dead from fox attack and exhaustion after buffeting by wind and waves.

Longer term observations of birds since 2016/2017, particularly in the north east bay, also indicate a reduction in diversity and numbers. This decline appears to be climate change related, including the aftermath of two East Coast Lows in 2015 and 2016. In the latter case, ocean warming, storm surge and high tide combined to overtop the sand bar, reversing the usual lake opening regime and resulting in a record ten months when the lake was open to the ocean. Large volumes of sand washed into the bay, smothering aquatic vegetation critical to the lake's ecosystem.

Lake levels have been very low ever since. Approximately 50% of the NE bay is now exposed sand and mudbanks. Crested Terns, Seagulls, Cormorants, Pelicans and Teal roost there, but few migratory waders utilise these areas and adjacent shallows. Instead, the waders are observed further out in the shallows and mudflats, or around the northern and eastern shores.

The appearance during December 2018 of an auction notice for 5 residential lots at Lot 1 East Crescent, Culburra Beach, came as an unwelcome surprise. The NSW Land and Environment Court approved a 14-lot residential and tourist style subdivision in 2012 despite objections from Council, NPWS and LWPA Inc and other residents.



#### SELLING - APPROVED DEVELOPMENT SITE - 14 LOTS

LOT 1, EAST CRESCENT, CULBURRA BEACH

A highly anticipated and rarely offered site is now for sale in Culburra Beach. Located on the shores of Lake Wollumboola the 3.3 hectare site has recently been granted approval for a 14 lot subdivision.

Bangalay Sand Forest Endangered Ecological Community covers most of the site which is adjacent to the Lake Wollumboola north shore. It is of high conservation value, recognised as such by its inclusion in the Halloran Planning Proposal as part of biodiversity offset sites for any rezoning of lands west of Culburra Beach for residential development. Accordingly, development of this sensitive site conflicts with this status.

Representatives of the land owner are apparently seeking variations to the application to facilitate its sale. There are significant grounds for objection however, given that the site is flood prone and contaminated, that the proposal would direct polluted urban drainage to the lake, that mature Bangalay trees and other vegetation supporting endangered flora and fauna would be cleared, and that increased access would disturb lake birdlife.

One good feature involves dedication of the shoreline area as a public reserve. However, once the lots are developed the reserve is likely to be degraded by illegal tracks, clearing and mowing.

Lake Wollumboola Protection Association Inc will seek support from BirdLife Shoalhaven in due course to object to this modified application. Council will advertise it for public comment. The application is available on SCC DA tracking as follows: DS/1491 application for modification of SF10071 subdivision Lot 1 East Crescent, Culburra Beach.

Further details are available on the Lake Wollumboola Protection Association Inc website News Page at [www.wollumboola.org.au](http://www.wollumboola.org.au)

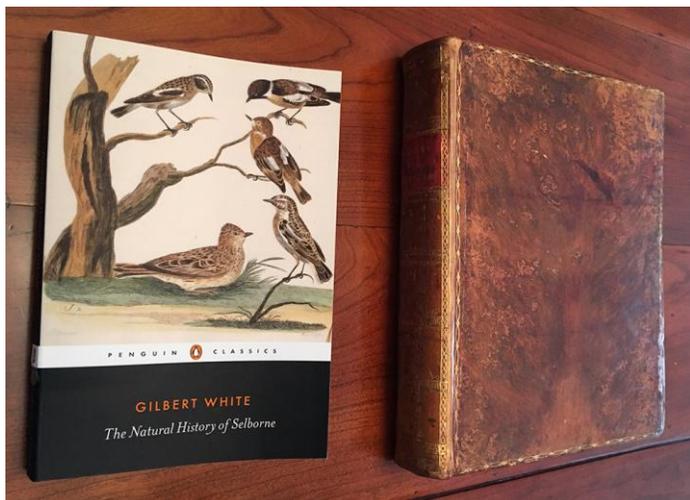
9<sup>th</sup> January 2019

## Gilbert White, the world's first birder

- by Rob Dunn

When you think of who was the pioneer of evolution and the origin of species, the name of Darwin immediately comes to mind. But who was the first birder, the forefather of natural history and ornithology and regarded by many as the first ecologist? The name of Gilbert White was new to me - though not to my wife!

White lived from 1720 to 1793 in Selborne, Hampshire in the UK, some 100 years before Darwin. Even when young he made notes on natural history. He was educated at Oxford before becoming ordained and based at various churches around England for 15 years.



In 1758, White moved back to his family home, The Wakes, which he later inherited. It was at The Wakes that he developed his ideas and made close seasonal observations of nature, known as phenology\*. He was the first to understand the values for species migration, then a disputed fact, developed the ideas of banding and bird census techniques and realised the significance of bird territories and song.



He is best known for his book "The Natural History and Antiquities of Selborne" in which he kept his "Garden Kalendar" and his "Naturalist's Journal". The book is based on his correspondence with two distinguished naturalists, Thomas Pennant and Daines Barrington. It became extremely popular at the time and is reputedly the fourth most published book in the English language, after the Bible, the works of Shakespeare and John Bunyan's "The Pilgrim's Progress". It was first published in 1789 with nearly 300 editions to date.

I was recently lucky enough to have a first edition of the book in my own hands, duly covered in white gloves. The first edition included engravings of paintings of the property and certain species by a famous artist of the time, Samuel Grimm. Some of these appear on larger pages which you need to fold-out from the main book.

The book I had in my hands also included observations and comments in the columns written in the hand of an owner a long time ago.

The book moves from detailed one-off field observations and the likely relevance of these events, to great one-liners, like, "Nature, who is a great economist, converts the recreation of one animal to the support of another."

The Wake has been converted into a museum and is in the South Downs National Park. This area is a good base for birding, although White observed some species that can no longer be found. One of these is the Great Bustard, which became extinct in Britain in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but is now subject to a reintroduction project.

If you are planning a trip to the area, why not also go to Charles Darwin House just one hundred kilometres away. A trip to the homes of the forefathers of evolution and phenology in one day!

One of White's lifelong friends, John Mulso, wrote to him in 1776. "Your work, upon the whole, will immortalize your Place of Abode as well as Yourself."

Time has proven him to be right.

\* phenology (noun)

the study of cyclic and seasonal natural phenomena

## Eyre Bird Observatory

- by Andrew and Sharon Morgan

The Eyre Bird Observatory (EBO) is in an isolated area on the Southern Ocean in Western Australia. The closest neighbours are 50 kilometres to the north at Cocklebiddy Roadhouse. The nearest town is Norseman - a six hour, 500 kilometre drive. Food is ordered online from the Norseman IGA and picked up from Cocklebiddy once a week.

Medical attention is provided by The Royal Flying Doctor who conduct clinics once a month at Cocklebiddy Roadhouse. When we had occasion to use it, the consultation took place in the front of the ute on the side of the airstrip while I chatted to the pilot.

It is a beautiful area with a number of varied habitats and hence a variety of birds. Approximately 250 species of birds have been recorded in the Atlas around Eyre. Eyre is an official BoM weather station. In the three months we were caretakers, temperatures ranged from -4.6 to 38.8 degrees. It averages 300mm or rain per year but the year total by the end of October was 320mm.

The house was built in 1897 to operate as a repeater station for the overland telegraph station. It is made of solid limestone blocks and is a pleasure to live in. Heating is an open fire, power is solar with a backup diesel generator and cooking is gas. Water is provided by two 5000 gallon tanks.

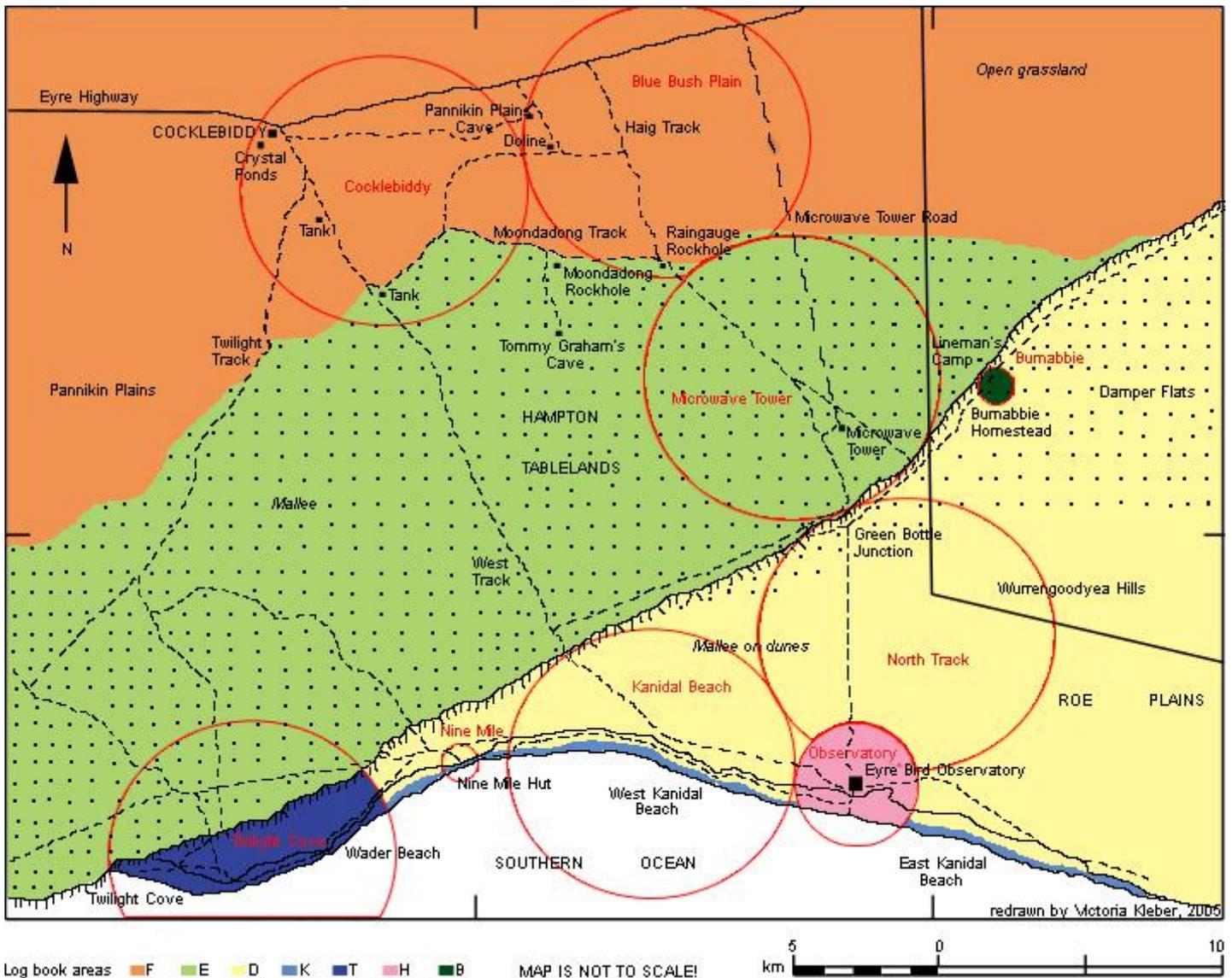
The Observatory is run by a dedicated committee from Perth, a number of whom would be well known to Graeme Chapman (interviewed in the Spring magazine).

The EBO has a rich history beginning with the Mirning people who call the area Wonundra. They had a presence there until the 1930's when the Protector of Aborigines and his rations moved to Eucla. In 1841 Edward John Eyre, John Baxter and three Aboriginal companions undertook the mammoth task of finding a route to join the eastern colonies to the west. They found water in the area at the base of the dunes and stayed for 28 days. It was named Eyre's Sandpatch.



Since then the EBO has been a repeater station for the Inter-Colonial Telegraph Line, abandoned in 1927 and restored beginning in 1976 by a partnership between the Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union (now BirdLife Australia) and the Post Office Historical Society.





During our time there, the ANU with Dr Janet Gardner conducted research on the impact of climate change on the morphology of birds, and therefore impacts on their survival in hotter conditions.



As caretakers we had many and varied tasks but the most enjoyable was completing the bird counts in the different Atlas areas (see map above). Kanidal Beach, Nine Mile and Twilight Cove all skirt the Southern Ocean. Many shorebirds visit these locations, with Red-capped Plovers and Pied Oystercatchers being breeding residents.

Various Sandpipers, Dotterels, Plovers, Stilts, Terns, Ruddy Turnstones, Gulls, Cormorants, Herons, Ducks and Sanderlings were regular visitors. White-bellied Sea-Eagles, Ospreys and Wedge-tailed Eagles also used these areas. Southern Right Whales and their calves, dolphins, seals and turtles added interest to these areas.

Every Friday we would travel to Cocklebidddy to collect our food. This involved counts in five Atlas areas. The North Track is a 10 kilometre sand track over dunes along the Roe Plain.

Most of this area was severely burnt in a major fire in February 2017. Smaller birds are slowly returning here as the regrowth Mallee and other vegetation returns.

On top of the escarpment is the Microwave Tower area. Once again this area of largely Mallee on the Hampton Plain has been severely burnt. There are many more raptors, Yellow-throated Miners and Black-faced Cuckoo-shrikes here. This leads to the Bluebush area nearer the highway. Here we found Ground Cuckoo-shrikes, Australian Bustards and Australasian Pipits.



Then we moved on to the grasslands with copses of Mallee on the Pannikin Plain. This area had numerous limestone caves and dolines (sink-holes), and the birds present included Woodswallows, Lapwings, Pardalotes, Chats, Mulga and Ringneck Parrots, Yellow-rumped Thornbills and Red-capped Robins amongst others.

Finally, there is Crystal Ponds which are the sewage ponds for the Cocklebidy Roadhouse. Here we recorded many of the waders we had seen on the beach.

The other Atlas area is a 2 kilometre radius around the observatory. The observatory has a number of bird baths and is surrounded by Mallee with a dense understory that escaped the fire.

Many honeyeaters dominate this area but Sacred Kingfishers, Blue-breasted Fairy-wrens, White-browed Scrubwrens, Babblers, Brush Bronzings and the iconic Major Mitchell's Cockatoo are common.

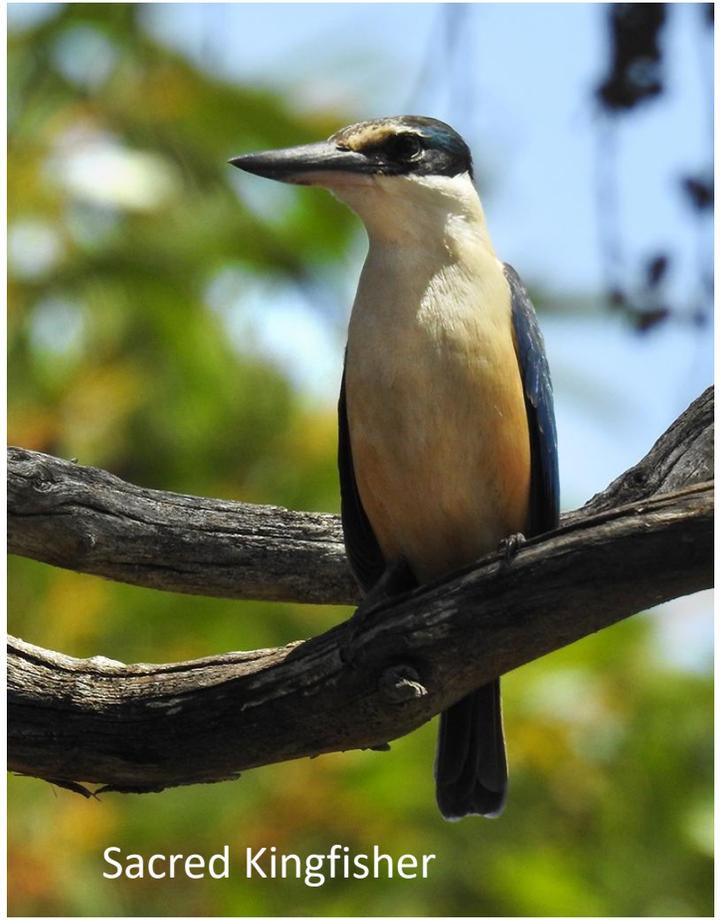
Our time at Eyre was very busy but very interesting. The historical background, incredible habitats and the people we met made our three months at the EBO something we will treasure.



White-winged Triller



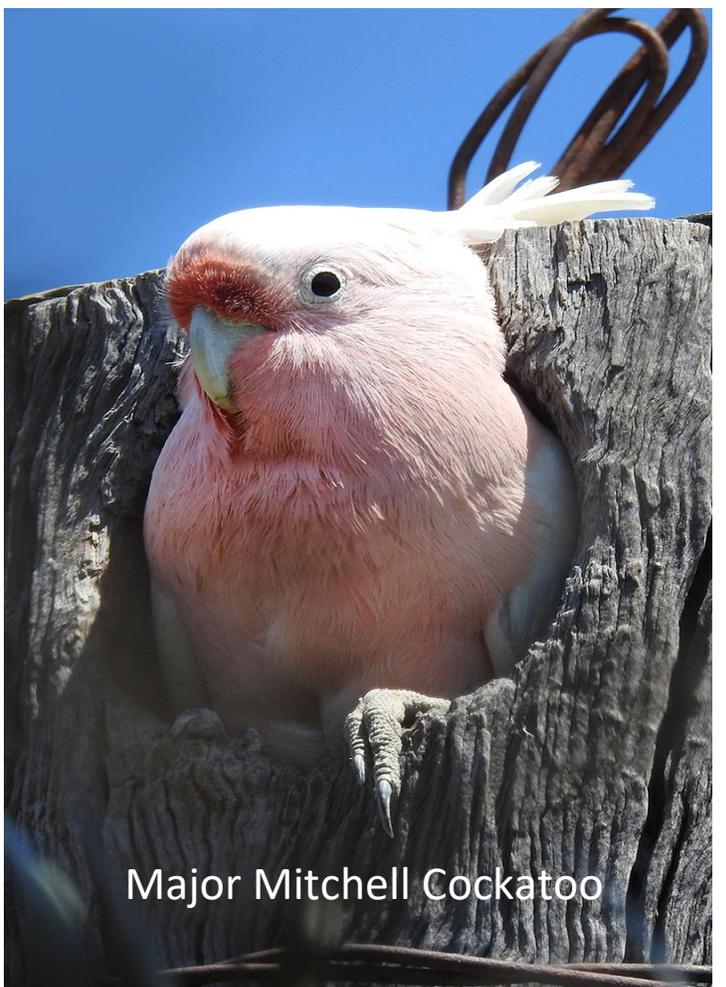
Sacred Kingfisher



Striated Pardalote



Major Mitchell Cockatoo



## Web Watch

- by Chris Grounds

Public reporting on bird matters has been a little quieter over recent months but there have been some legitimate distractions in the festive season of course.

There is also a sobering article-link on our conservation success with threatened species in Australia. The birds however have been getting on with it and as this BLS edition will attest, there has been plenty happening locally. You might like to check out the Conservation Curiosities article on page 9.

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### Adani and Black-throated Finches

[www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/dec/30/adani-conservation-area-for-endangered-finch-sits-on-proposed-clive-palmer-mine](http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/dec/30/adani-conservation-area-for-endangered-finch-sits-on-proposed-clive-palmer-mine)



Adani has set aside a "conservation area" for the endangered Black-throated Finch at the same site earmarked for the massive Clive Palmer-backed Alpha North coalmine.

The environmental group Lock the Gate said the land-use conflict meant the Adani plan to protect the Black-throated Finch - which is one of two crucial management plans for the Carmichael mine yet to be approved by the Queensland government - amounted to an "elaborate hoax".

In applications, Waratah Coal has acknowledged that Alpha North could cause subsidence, and could affect Black-throated Finch habitat and watercourses. The bird is endangered and researchers have previously said the Adani Carmichael mine's offset strategy would be "grossly inadequate" to protect it.

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### Why do birds sing?

<https://theconversation.com/curious-kids-why-do-birds-sing-98381>



Birds don't use words like people do, but they also need to learn their songs, the same way babies need to learn talk by listening to their families speaking their own language (so some human babies learn English, others learn French, or Chinese, or Greek).

Most other animals are born already knowing the sounds they need to communicate, but baby birds spend a long time learning how to sing.

Some birds have even bigger repertoires because they sing sounds of other birds - e.g. magpies and especially the amazing lyrebird.

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### Bath bullies: the secret world of bird baths

<https://theconversation.com/bath-bullies-bacteria-and-battlefields-the-secret-world-of-bird-baths-65629>



In a dry continent such as Australia, bird baths may be vital to supporting an otherwise stressed bird population. We wanted to find out more, so we enlisted the help of thousands of citizen scientists across Australia to gather as much data as we could on how birds use bird baths.

And so the Bathing Birds Study was born. Started by researchers at Deakin University and Griffith University in 2014, this study involved collecting data online from 2,500 citizen scientists on bathing birds all over Australia.

The study has revealed so far that bird baths are much more than just ornamental splash pools for feathered visitors. They're also a site where animals socialize and intense rivalries play out. Human choices - such as the design of the bird bath, where it is located and how often it is cleaned - can have a big impact on birds.

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### Measuring Bird Conservation Success

<https://theconversation.com/for-the-first-time-weve-looked-at-every-threatened-bird-in-australia-side-by-side-107432>



How do you measure conservation success? How do you compare cockatoo nest protection with any other investment in conservation?

Unfortunately, we have few ways to compare and track the different efforts many people may be making to help conserve our natural treasures.

That's why a group of us from a dozen Australian universities along with scientists and private researchers around the world have created metrics of progress for both our understanding of how to manage threats of different intensity, and how well that management has

been implemented. We also provide guidance on what still needs doing before a threat no longer needs active management.

For the first time, we looked at every threatened bird in Australia to see how well - or not - they are managed. Hopefully, we can use this to avoid compounding our disastrous recent track record of extinctions in Australia.

What we did differently was collect the same data across different species, which meant we could compare conservation efforts across all birds.

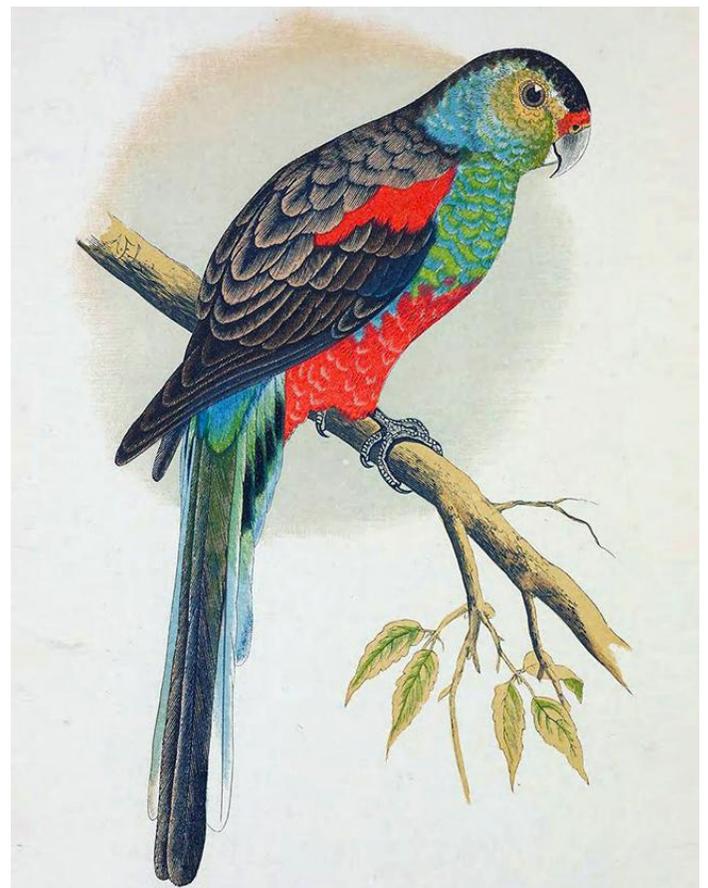
When we applied these metrics to Australia's 238 threatened bird species, the results were both encouraging and daunting. The good news is that we *understand* how to reduce the impact of about 52% of the threats - although of course that means we know little about how to deal with the other 48%.

**But the situation is decidedly worse when we consider how effectively we are putting that research into practice. Only 43% of threats are being managed in any way at all - and just a third of the worst threats - and we are achieving good outcomes for just 20%.**

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### Strengthen environmental protections in drought

<https://theconversation.com/we-must-strengthen-not-weaken-environmental-protections-during-drought-or-face-irreversible-loss-102901>



Australian rural communities face hardships during extended drought, and it is generally appropriate that governments then provide special support for affected landholders and communities.

However, some politicians and commentators have recently claimed that such circumstances should be addressed by circumventing environmental laws or management - by, for example, reallocating environmental water to grow fodder or opening up conservation reserves for livestock grazing.

But subverting or weakening existing protective conservation management practices and policies will exacerbate the impacts of drought on natural environments and biodiversity.

Drought contributed to the extinction of one of Australia's most beautiful birds, the Paradise Parrot.

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### **Australia is failing to save wildlife from extinction**

<https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/government-experts-say-plan-to-prevent-animal-extinctions-is-failing-20181105-p50e2d.html>

The Morrison government's own threatened species experts say Australia is failing in its plan to save wildlife from extinction and the crisis is damaging the nation's reputation overseas.

It comes as environment officials pull plans for an international unveiling of the government's widely panned threatened species strategy, after critics derided it as a "global embarrassment" which "reads like a Year 10 school assignment".



Australia has the world's worst record of mammal extinction - about one in 10 have disappeared since European settlement. Almost 500 animals and 1300 plants are officially deemed threatened.

The federal government's own experts say Australia is failing in efforts to save threatened species, such as the Orange-bellied Parrot.

A Senate inquiry is examining the faunal extinction crisis. The Threatened Species Scientific Committee, made up of eminent scientists who advise Environment Minister Melissa Price, says Australia has strong environment laws, is signatory to international conservation treaties and leads the world in conservation science.

However the march towards extinction of Australian species "indicates that this capacity is not deployed effectively to achieve outcomes, a situation that reflects poorly on Australia's global reputation", the committee said in written evidence to the inquiry.

An alliance of Australia's biggest environment groups described the document as a "global embarrassment" that replaced specific targets for success with sweeping, immeasurable goals. The International Union for Conservation of Nature described it as "fundamentally deficient".

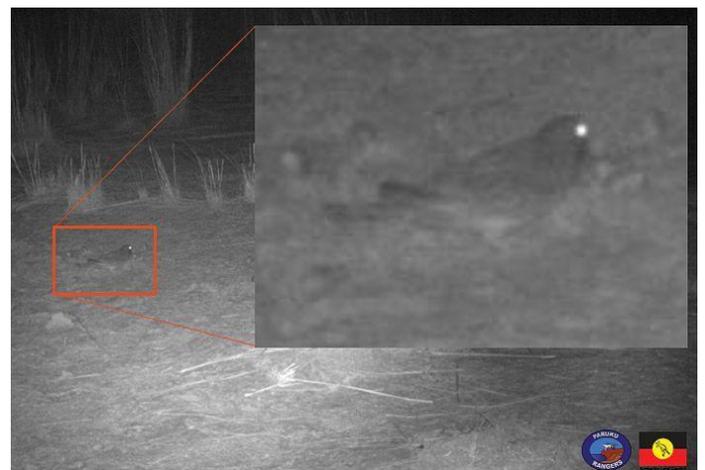
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### **Night parrot's Kimberley location under wraps**

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-11-24/night-parrot-photographed-in-kimberley-for-only-second-time/10550784>

The night parrot has been dubbed one of the world's most mysterious birds. It is endangered and known to exist in very small numbers in Western Queensland.

But in October, Paruku rangers in Western Australia's Kimberley region captured the second-known photo of the bird in the Great Sandy Desert in just over a year.



## Eastern curlews are disappearing fast: Harry Saddler

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/jan/08/eastern-curlews-are-a-miracle-of-nature-and-they-are-disappearing-fast>

Harry Saddler is the author of *The Eastern Curlew*, which has just been published by Affirm Press and was a special guest at the BIRDAHVEN FESTIVAL at Shoalhaven Heads in 2018.



This remarkable bird flies from Siberia to Australia and back every year, but we must save the unglamorous mudflats if it is to survive.

Before it leaves Australia it spends weeks feeding so that by the time it leaves, it has nearly doubled its own bodyweight in fat, the fuel for its migration. Just before departure the internal organs that it doesn't need while flying shrivel up to almost nothing, saving the bird a precious few grams of weight.

When it leaves Australia it flies for days, non-stop to the Yellow Sea, where it replenishes its fat reserves on the intertidal mudflats of north-east China and the Korean peninsula. Then it flies non-stop to Siberia. It stays in Siberia for only six weeks: long enough to breed and then incubate the eggs. Baby curlews are independent from the day they hatch, and once the chicks hatch the adults head south again.

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### Vital tidal flats lost to development and rising sea levels

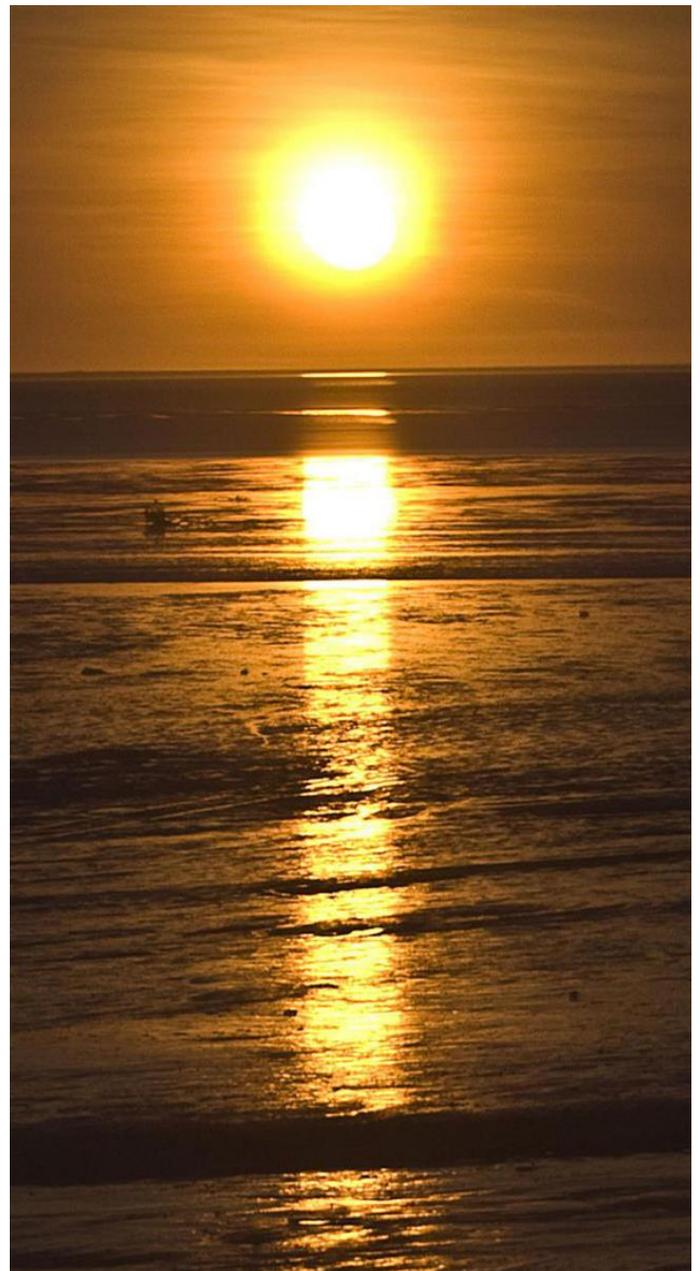
<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/dec/29/vital-ecosystems-in-tidal-flats-lost-to-development-and-rising-sea-levels>

Vital ecosystems in tidal flats are being lost to development and rising sea levels. Coastal development and sea level rise are causing the decline of tidal flats along the world's coastlines, according to research that has mapped the ecosystems for the first time.

Scientists from the University of New South Wales (UNSW) and the University of Queensland used machine-learning to analyze more than 700,000 satellite images to map the extent of and change in tidal flats around the globe. The study, published in *Nature*, found tidal flat ecosystems in some countries declined by as much as 16% in the years from 1984 to 2016.

Tidal flats are mud flats, sand flats or wide rocky reef platforms that are important coastal ecosystems. They act as buffers to storms and sea level rise and provide habitat for many species, including migratory birds and fish nurseries.

Almost 50% of the global extent of tidal flats is concentrated in just eight countries: Indonesia, China, Australia, the US, Canada, India, Brazil and Myanmar.



## Jervis Bay KBA Report - Summer 2019

- by Karen Davis, Guardian Jervis Bay KBA  
(Photos by Chris Grounds and Brett Davis)

**Quarterly surveys** in the Jervis Bay Key Biodiversity Area (KBA) are continuing. Following are some stats from the last surveys in each location and interesting bird sightings. These are all 500m radius surveys.

**Kim Touzel's** survey around the Ruined Lighthouse area, which is now regenerating after the September 2017 fires, recorded 18 species. This site is a good spot to see White-bellied Sea-Eagles, Variegated Fairy-wrens and Eastern Bristlebirds - the target bird species for the KBA. As regeneration continues, more species are likely to be seen here, and it is also a good site for albatrosses on wild and windy days, and whales on calm days in season.

The survey **Brett Davis and I** do at the Vincentia Cross Roads goes from the Bay and Basin Leisure Centre, past the oval, through Bayswood and back past the ponds at the Vincentia Marketplace.

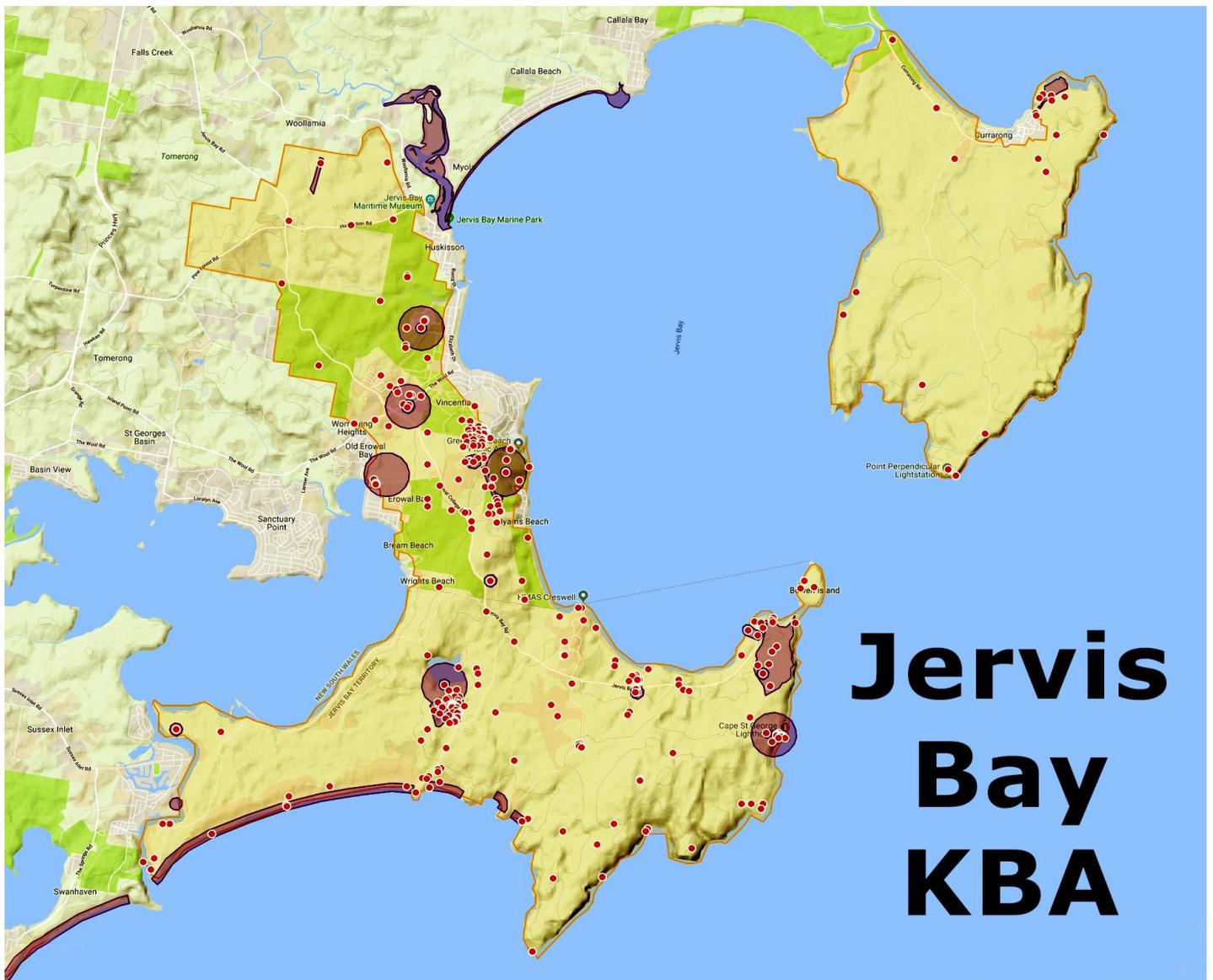
Our last survey in December recorded 39 species including some fledglings. Species of interest recorded in this area include Australian Reed-Warbler, Australasian Pipit, Sacred Kingfisher, Brown Quail and usually one raptor or another will be seen.

Little Grassbirds and Tawny-crowned Honeyeaters have also been seen in the revegetation area near the Marketplace carpark.

**Robyn Hill's** last survey at the Vincentia WTP and heathland recorded 42 species. This is always a fantastic birding location and usually the resident pair of Black-fronted Dotterels can be seen.

The Black Swans had two chicks on this survey and White-throated Needletails and a Peregrine Falcon were also recorded.

A variety of ducks, grebes and cormorants are always seen here plus a good selection of birds usually seen in woodland and heath.





**Wendy Hartman** surveys the heathland above Hyams Beach. On Wendy's last survey 23 species were recorded. Of special interest were Bar-shouldered Doves, Shining Bronze-Cuckoos, White-cheeked Honeyeaters and Tawny-crowned Honeyeaters. This site at times can also have Dusky Woodswallows, Southern Emu-wrens, and if you are lucky, Ground Parrots.



The Woollamia Nature Reserve has a survey site named Pritchard Lane which is surveyed by **Yolande Cozijn**. Yolande's last survey recorded 20 species which included Musk and Little Lorikeets, Jacky Winters and Shining Bronze-Cuckoos. Yellow Thornbills and Brown Thornbills are often recorded at this site also.

**Chris Grounds** surveys a site in the Heritage Estate at Erowal Bay. His last survey recorded 16 species which included Koels, Rufous Whistlers, Golden Whistlers and Scarlet Honeyeaters. This site also gets Little Lorikeets and Bar-shouldered Doves plus a good variety of species.

A big "thank you" to the above members for devoting time and effort to these surveys on a regular basis.

If you do a survey at one of the above sites **please record the bird species and number seen and enter it into**

**Birdata** under the relevant Shared Site. If you would like a site of your own I would love to hear from you.

A **recent issue** that has arisen in the KBA stems from the use of liquid fire fighting foam at Jervis Bay Range Facility and HMAS Creswell. This foam contains PFAS (poly-fluoroalkyl substances). Signs with precautionary advice are in place at Mary Creek, Summercloud Creek, Flatrock Creek and Captain's Lagoon. Hopefully this chemical will not affect the birds and their successful breeding in the KBA.

On a larger scale, Golo Maurer, the KBA Program Leader at BirdLife Australia has reported the highlights to him of the whole KBA program in 2018. They were:



**Preventing Extinctions:** The decision to refuse mining expansion on Christmas Island KBA followed a BirdLife Australia campaign that saw a petition signed by over 50,000 people - our biggest response ever. This helps save two of Australia's most threatened seabirds (Abbot's Booby and the Christmas Island Frigate Bird) and over 200 endemic or threatened critters on the island.

**Growing Knowledge:** We now have recent Health-checks for over one third of all Australian KBAs, 80 in 2018 alone! This gives us a good handle on what threatens Australian KBAs most.

**Birding KBAs:** Monitoring in KBAs is going strong with over 10,000 surveys in 2018 recorded in Birdata, that is more than 1 survey per hour on average.

**Importantly,** Over 3,000 new "Shared Sites" have been created on Birdata for you to go birding at. Your birding here is extra valuable as it is part of a longer term data series. To find a site near you or to plan a trip go to: [birdata.birdlife.org.au](http://birdata.birdlife.org.au)

## BirdLife Shoalhaven Calendar for 2019

Date	Event / Location / Group*	Details - meeting time and place, leaders etc.
<b>January</b> -----		
Fri 18th	ANU Kioloa Campus (MUD)	Meet 8 am: ANU Campus. Drive almost to Kioloa, watch for ANU sign on right. Leaders: Marg Hamon & Maggie Mance 4457 1129
Sun 20th	Shoalhaven Heads Shorebird Talk	Walk and talk with Chris Grounds from BLS. Meet at 9:00am in the car park at the end of River Road, Shoalhaven Heads.
<b>February</b> -----		
Sun 17th	Shoalhaven Heads (SB)	Meet 8:30am in the car park at the end of River Road, Shoalhaven Heads. Contacts: Su and Stan - 0419 287 224 or (02) 4443-4828
Tues 19th	<b>Walk / Dinner / AGM / Trivia</b>	See page 3 of this magazine for details.
<b>March</b> -----		
Sun 17th	Currarong (SB)	Meet 8:30am corner of Forest Rd / Currarong Rd and Coonemia Rd Intersection. Contacts: Su and Stan - 0419 287 224 or (02) 4443-4828
<b>April</b> -----		
Sun 14th	Twin Waters / Worrigeer NR (SB)	Meet 8:30am Twin Waters Reserve. Contacts: Su and Stan - 0419 287 224 or (02) 4443-4828
<b>May</b> -----		
Sun 19th	Jerrara Dam / Spring Creek (SB)	Meet 8:30am Apex Park, Albert St. Berry. Contacts: Su and Stan - 0419 287 224 or (02) 4443-4828

\* The BirdLife Shoalhaven calendar contains activities from the branch (**BLS**) and two associated birdwatching groups - Shoalhaven Birders (**SB**) and the Milton-Ulladulla District Birdwatching Club (**MUD**). BLS members can attend all activities. SB have no leaders on their outings and it is possible that nobody else will turn up, especially if the weather is bad. Contacts: Stan and Su Brown 4443-4828 and 0419 287 224. MUD have outings every fortnight on Fridays from 8am until about 11am. For information about joining MUD phone Marg Hamon 4457-1129 or Chris Shinton 4454-5584 or email [mubirdclub@gmail.com](mailto:mubirdclub@gmail.com).

### Contributions

If you have any bird photographs, articles, conservation issues, birding experiences, anecdotes or sightings that you would like to share with fellow members, please send to the editor (Brett Davis) at [shoalhaven@birdlife.org.au](mailto:shoalhaven@birdlife.org.au)

Suggestions, criticisms, feedback (positive and negative) and corrections are always welcome.

### Acknowledgements

Thank you to all the BirdLife Shoalhaven members and friends who contributed articles and photos for this magazine. These include Charles Dove, John Wilde, Rob Dunn, Frances Bray, Andrew and Sharon Morgan, Karen Davis, Ralph Stadus, Karen Davis, Kim Touzel, Christine Rigg, Norm and Maureen Webb, and Chris Grounds.

In addition, images and text from the following websites have been used in this magazine - [outerbanks.org](http://outerbanks.org), [youtube.com](http://youtube.com), and [stuff.co.nz](http://stuff.co.nz).

Apologies to those contributors whose text or images have not been acknowledged. If this applies to you, please let the editor know, and the error will be rectified in the next magazine.

### General Disclaimer

The information in articles submitted for publication in this magazine is accepted in good faith and although the editor has endeavoured to verify the accuracy of all information, BirdLife Shoalhaven and BirdLife Australia accept no responsibility for any of the errors, inaccuracies or exaggerations that may be contained within articles in this magazine.

Also, the views expressed in this magazine are those of the editor, individual contributors and branch members. They may not be the views of BirdLife Shoalhaven or BirdLife Australia.

### Errors

If you find any errors - typographical or factual - in this magazine, please let the editor know.

### Cover Photo

This season's cover photo of a White-bellied Sea-Eagle was taken by Charles Dove as it flew over the Wilfords Lane Wetlands. A report by Charles on the Wetlands can be found on page 13.

**Australia's voice for birds since 1901**

BirdLife Australia is dedicated to achieving outstanding conservation results for our native birds and their habitats.

With our specialised knowledge and the commitment of an Australia-wide network of volunteers and supporters, we are creating a bright future for Australia's birds.

[birdlife.org.au](http://birdlife.org.au)

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**join us**

Enjoy the rewards of membership, making a real difference for our native birds

**volunteer**

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**donate**

Help us create positive outcomes for birds and their habitats